

THRILLING ANC WONDER STORIES

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

15¢
OCT.



In This Issue

**JAMES MACCREIGH
LESLIE CHARTERIS
HENRY KUTTNER
ROBERT A. HEINLEIN
MANLY WADE WELLMAN
MARGARET ST. CLAIR**

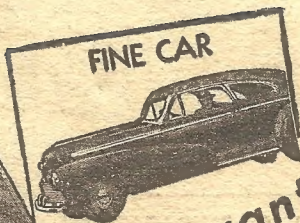
And Others

SEE the new SEE!



America's Favorite Picture Magazine
is now bigger and better than ever —
more pages, more pictures, more features —
more entertainment for everybody!

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!



To the man who wants to enjoy
an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

Of course, you need something more than just the desire to be an accountant. You've got to pay the price—be willing to study earnestly, thoroughly.

Still, wouldn't it be worth your while to sacrifice some of your leisure in favor of interesting home study—over a comparatively brief period in your life? Always provided that the rewards were good—a salary of \$3,000 to \$10,000?

An accountant's duties are interesting, varied and of real worth to his employers. He has *standing*!

Do you feel that such things aren't for you? Well, don't be too sure. Very possibly they can be!

Why not, like so many before you, investigate LaSalle's modern Problem Method of training for an accountancy position?

Just suppose you were permitted to work in a large accounting house under the personal supervision of an expert accountant. Suppose, with his aid, you studied accounting principles and solved problems day by day—easy ones at first—then the more difficult ones. If you could do this—and if you could turn to him for advice as the problems became complex—soon you'd master them all.

That's the training you follow in principle under the LaSalle Problem Method.

You cover accountancy from the basic Principles right up through Accountancy Systems and Income Tax Procedure. Then you add C. P. A. Training and prepare for the C. P. A. examinations.

As you go along, you absorb the principles of Auditing, Cost Accounting, Business Law, Statistical Control, Organization, Management and Finance.

Your progress is as speedy as you care to make it—depending on your own eagerness to learn and the time you spend in study.

Will recognition come? The only answer, as you know, is that success *does* come to the man who is really *trained*. It's possible your employers will notice your improvement in a very few weeks or months. Indeed, many LaSalle graduates have paid for their training—with increased earnings—before they have completed it! For accountants, who are trained in organization and management, are the executives of the future.

Write For This Free Book

For your own good, don't put off investigation of *all* the facts. Write for our free 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays." It'll prove that accountancy offers brilliant futures to those who aren't afraid of serious home study. Send us the coupon *now*.

Over 2300 Certified
Public Accountants among
LaSalle alumni

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY A CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTION

417 South Dearborn Street, Dept. 10329-H, Chicago 5, Illinois

I want to be an accountant. Send me, without cost or obligation, the 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays," and full information about your accountancy training program.

Name

Address

Position

City

Age



THRILLING WONDER STORIES

Vol. XXXI, No. 1

A THRILLING PUBLICATION

October, 1947



An Amazing Complete Novel

DONOVAN HAD A DREAM

By JAMES MacCREIGH

When Venus is ruled by a matriarchy of Hags, a quartet of gallant rebels seizes the weapons that can topple tyranny from its throne and establish a new reign of freedom! 11

Two Complete Novelets

JERRY IS A MAN.....Robert A. Heinlein 46

He was an anthropoid—but did that make him human or ape? On the answer hinged the commercial destiny of the future world!

THE DARKER DRINK.....Leslie Charteris 66

The Saint—Simon Templar—is a man of countless adventures, but never one like this, in which he lives another's nightmare!

Short Stories

THE TIME TWISTER.....Francis Flagg and Weaver Wright 61

Professor Streiff is plunged into shuddering vistas of time-space

PROBATE.....Margaret St. Clair 80

Scientist Donaldson stages a revolt against the superior New Man

EXIT THE PROFESSOR.....Henry Kuttner 83

The Kentucky Hogbans were hillbillies with a difference

THE TONGUE CANNOT TELL.....Manly Wade Wellman 90

What John Latimer saw proved too alien for man's understanding

Special Features

THE READER SPEAKS.....The Editor 6

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW.....A New Department 111

Cover painting by Earle Bergey—Illustrating "Donovan Had A Dream"

Published every other month by STANDARD MAGAZINES, INC., 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Copyright, 1947, by Standard Magazines, Inc. Subscription (12 issues), \$1.80, single copies, 15c. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. Re-entered as second-class matter October 8, 1946, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence.

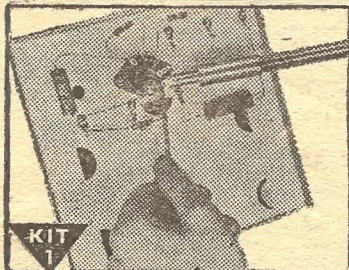
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Read Our Companion Science Fiction Magazine—STARTLING STORIES

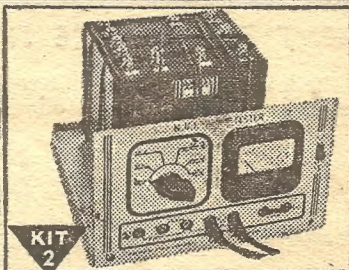


I Will Show You How to Learn RADIO by Practicing in Spare Time

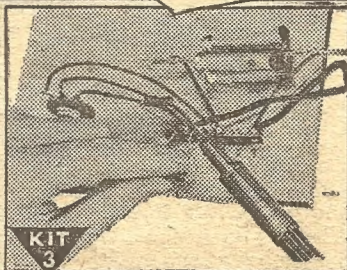
**I Send You
Big Kits
of Radio Parts**



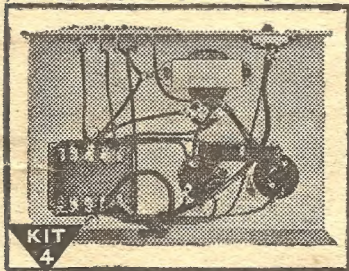
I send you Soldering Equipment and Radio Parts; show you how to do Radio soldering; how to mount and connect Radio parts; give you practical experience.



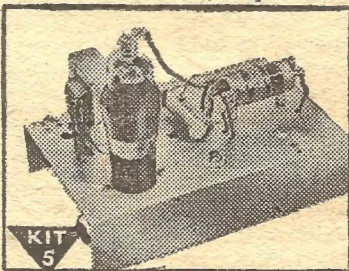
Early in my course I show you how to build this N.R.I. Tester with parts I send. It soon helps you fix neighborhood Radios and earn EXTRA money in spare time.



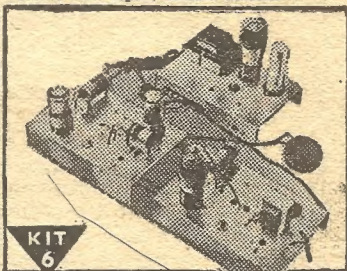
You get parts to build Radio Circuits; then test them; see how they work; learn how to design special circuits; how to locate and repair circuit defects.



You get parts to build this Vacuum Tube Power Pack; make changes which give you experience with packs of many kinds; learn to correct power pack troubles.



Building this A. M. Signal Generator gives you more valuable experience. It provides amplitude-modulated signals for many tests and experiments.



You build this Superheterodyne Receiver which brings in local and distant stations—and gives you more experience to help you win success in Radio.

KNOW RADIO—Win Success I Will Train You at Home—SAMPLE LESSON FREE

APPROVED
for training
under
G. I. BILL

Do you want a good-pay job in the fast-growing Radio Industry—or your own Radio Shop? Mail the Coupon for a Sample Lesson and my 64-page book, "How to Be a Success in RADIO—Television, Electronics," both FREE. See how I will train you at home—how you get practical Radio experience building, testing Radio circuits with BIG KITS OF PARTS I send!

Many Beginners Soon Make Extra Money in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll I start sending EXTRA MONEY JOB SHEETS that show how to make EXTRA money fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time

VETERANS

You can get this training right in your own home under G. I. Bill. Mail coupon for full details.

while still learning! It's probably easier to get started now than ever before, because the Radio Repair Business is booming. Trained Radio Technicians also find profitable opportunities in Police, Aviation, Marine Radio, Broadcasting, Radio Manufacturing, Public Address work. Think of even greater opportunities as Television, FM, and Electronic devices become available to the public! Send for FREE books now!

My training includes TELEVISION • ELECTRONICS • F M

Find Out What NRI Can Do For You

Mail Coupon for Sample Lesson and my FREE 64-page book. Read the details about my Course; letters from men I trained; see how quickly, easily you can get started. No obligation! Just MAIL COUPON NOW in envelope or paste on penny postal. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7K09, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

Good for Both—FREE

Mr. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7K09
National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.
Mail me FREE, your sample lesson and 64-
page book. (No salesman will call. Please
write plainly.)

Name.....Age.....

Address.....

City.....Zone.....State.....

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH
RECEIVER SERVICING

**How to Be a
Success
in RADIO**
TELEVISION
ELECTRONICS



A DEPARTMENT FOR SCIENCE FICTION FANS

WHEN you read on to the letter portion of this department you will undoubtedly notice that the character of Bud Gregory, the hillbilly atomic expert, has caused considerable reaction, both pro and con. He is definitely the sort of character you can believe in or must hoot at to save your own sanity.

Mr. Fitzgerald meant him to be that way. When we first discussed the idea, the possibility of some man acquiring "natural" knowledge that would baffle the most expert logicians and book-scientists seemed to hold the elements of a "series" character. If such a character is controversial, so much the better.

By way of reassurance, however, we did bring up the Vermont farm boy who startled the Mathematics Department of Harvard University out of its collective wits some years ago by discovering logarithms on his own—and virtually without schooling. He rated as one of the great mathematical geniuses of all time, even though he had the misfortune to invent something which had already been discovered.

Certainly many of the theses, designs and inventions of Leonardo da Vinci were far ahead of their time. And how else could he have discovered so many novelties had his imagination not been both creative and understanding of principles no mere scientist had then expressed.

Genius is Indefinable

It seems to us that such a "natural" scientist is of far greater calibre and potential use than any school-developed "experts" in any field of science. For science, like the arts, can never belong to the average or mediocre—not if real progress is going to be made. And genius, despite age-long efforts by the above-mentioned average and mediocre folks is as indefinable as a spring breeze.

All of this is the result of a letter from N.C. Gourlay of 3 Thorntree Drive, Denton Burn, Newcastle-on-Tyne 5, England. Both letter and the enclosure which accompanied it seem to us to be worthy of special atten-

tion and reprinting in this department. The letter follows.

COALS FROM NEWCASTLE by N. C. Gourlay

Dear Sir: I am writing to congratulate you on your two magazines, THRILLING WONDER STORIES and STARTLING STORIES. It was good again to obtain TWS and SS after a seven year break. I think the general tone of both magazines is higher than in pre-war days and, with stories like CALL HIM DEMON, VALLEY OF THE FLAME, THE DARK WINDOW and THE PLEASURE AGE, you have given us not only fantasy but literary classics. Hammond, Kuttner and Cahill get my vote for the best three modern TWS or SS writers. I think this is because of their beautiful use of English—a use which puts their stories above usual magazine standards.

Murray Leinster, who has been a favorite of mine since RED DUST and THE MAD PLANET, comes next on my list of writers with his POCKET UNIVERSES and the KIM RENDELL stories. In BOOMERANG CIRCUIT, however, did he not use the same idea as Zagat's in THE LANSON SCREEN in 1937? He used it in a different way, however, which did not spoil the interest of the story.

I must confess that when I read THE GREGORY CIRCLE I was rather annoyed with Mr. Fitzgerald for putting such an impossible character forward in stf. However, truth is stranger than fiction and, after coming across the enclosed cutting in an article on the English canal system, I became a Bud Gregory enthusiast and place THE NAMELESS SOMETHING as the best story of the June TWS.

Mr. Gourlay does not give the title of magazine, article or author, but here is the "cutting" he took the trouble to enclose:

Who would believe that an odd-job mechanic with no educational background, a man who could hardly read, certainly could not spell or draw, could undertake and complete what was one of the greatest engineering feats of the time?

Such a man was James Brindley. Born in 1716, he was the son of a small farmer in Derbyshire—"a dissolute sort of fellow who neglected his children, did little or no work and devoted his energies to the then popular sport of bull-baiting." Young James had no sort of schooling, but he was early apprenticed to a millwright and it was not long before he showed an amazing aptitude for practical engineering.

When the Duke of Bridgewater offered him his great opportunity he was running a little business of his own at Leek, repairing machinery and usually improving it, besides inventing new, but never did he show any inclination to learn the theoretical side of engineering in the orthodox way.

As Samuel Smiles has said of him: "He had to work out for himself all the problems connected with canal making, including the method of making the canal water-tight. He had to act as surveyor, contractor, engineer, foreman of the works and inventor of the appliances required." Almost all of this he

(Continued on page 8)

THOUSANDS NOW PLAY who never thought they could!



Thrilled by Playing

I've had my lessons just a week. I think your course is super. I was more thrilled than words can express when I found I could actually play America, The Merry Widow Waltz and the others.

*J. T., Mancelona, Mich.



Wouldn't Take \$1000 for Course

The lessons are so simple that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course.

*S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo.



Shares Course With Sister

The teaching is so interesting and the pieces so beautiful I couldn't ask for anything better. I recommend your course highly. My sister shares it with me and feels the same way.

*D. E. G., Wausau, Wisc.



Finding New Joy

I am finding a new joy that I never experienced before, for I have always wanted to play, but had given up hope until I heard of your course.

*C. S. Lucien, Okla.



Plays After 2 Months

I hesitated before sending for your course because of an earlier experience I had with a course by ear from another company. I am playing pieces now I never dreamed I would play after only two months.

*E. T., Prichard, Ala.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

You, too, can play any instrument By this EASY A-B-C Method

YOU think it's difficult to learn music? That's what thousands of others have thought! Just like you, they long to play some instrument—the piano, violin, guitar, saxophone or other favorites. But they denied themselves the pleasure—because they thought it took months and years of tedious study to learn.

Learn in Spare Time at Home

And then they made an amazing discovery! They learned about a wonderful way to learn music at home—without a private teacher—without tedious study—and in a surprisingly short time. They wrote to the U. S. School of Music for the facts about this remarkable short-cut method. And the facts opened their eyes! They were amazed to find how easy it was to learn.

The result? Over 850,000 men and women have studied music at home this simple, A-B-C way. Now, all over the world, enthusiastic music-lovers are enjoying the thrilling satisfaction of creating their own music. They have found the key to good time, popularity and profit.

Costs only few cents a Day

And that's what you can do, right now. Get the proof that you, too, can learn to play your favorite instrument—quickly, easily, in spare

time at home for only a few cents a day. Never mind if you have no musical knowledge, training or talent. Just read the fascinating booklet and Print and Picture sample that fully explain all about the famous U. S. School method. If interested tear out the coupon now, before you turn the page. U. S. School of Music, 29410 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y. Largest school of its kind in the world. (49th year)

FREE!

Print and Picture Sample

NOTICE
Please don't confuse our method with any systems claiming to teach "without music" or "by ear". We teach you easily and quickly to play real music, any music, by standard notes . . . not by any trick or number system.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
29410 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet "How to Learn Music at Home," and your free Print and Picture Sample.

Piano	Saxophone	Clarinet	Practical
Guitar	Trumpet, Cornet	Trombone	Finger
Hawaiian	Reed Organ	Flute	Control
Guitar	Tenor Banjo	Modern	Piccolo
Violin	Ukulele	Elementary	Mandolin
Piano Accordion		Harmony	

Name..... Have you Instrument?.....
(Please print)

Address.....

City..... State.....

NOTE: If you are under 16 years of age, parent must sign coupon.

SAVE 2c—STICK COUPON ON PENNY POSTCARD

Learn this Profitable Profession

IN 90 DAYS AT HOME
MONEY-MAKING CAREER OPEN to MEN and WOMEN, 18 to 50



Hundreds of men and women between 18 and 50 make \$10 to \$20 in a single day giving Scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is big demand from doctors, hospitals, sanatoriums and clubs. Graduates earn large full time incomes from these or in private practice in their own offices. Others make good money from home treatments given in spare time. Learn this interesting, money-making profession in your own home, through our home study course. Same instructors as in our nationally known resident school. You can win independence and prepare for future security by qualifying for our Diploma. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. Many earn while they learn. Begin your training at once.



Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Enroll now and we will include, at no extra cost, many needed supplies. Fit yourself to help meet growing demand for Scientific Swedish Massage. Send the coupon at once for complete details. Anatomy Charts and 32-page illustrated Booklet. FREE, postpaid.

THE COLLEGE OF SWEDISH MASSAGE
 Dept. 763M, 100 East Ohio St., Chicago 11, Illinois

Please send me FREE and postpaid, Anatomy Charts, 32-page Booklet and complete details on Home Training.

Name

Address

City State

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Secure "Patent Guide" together with "Record of Invention" form—without obligation.

CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON

Registered Patent Attorneys

78-K District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

High School Course

at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H.S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-755, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

DETECTIVES

Home Study in Detective Training—Professionally Modernized—Recognized Instructors—Easy Payments—Write:
 INTERNATIONAL DETECTIVE TRAINING SCHOOL
 1701-T Monroe St., N. E. Washington 18, D. C.

SELL SHOES DESIGNED BY Dr. R. M. KIEL D. S. C.

Every man or woman in your territory needs the supreme comfort and good looks of these fine shoes, made by leading company of its kind... and sold thru well-paid Direct Salesmen.

FREE SAMPLE OUTFIT!

Learn how you can earn liberal Cash Profits Daily with 20 styles of Shoes, Leather Jackets, Raincoats, etc. We show you how to fit each customer perfectly, and furnish you FREE with everything you need. Send name, address on a post-card now!

CONSOLIDATED SHOE SYSTEMS
 DEPT. S-514, CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN

GET SPECIAL OFFER NOW!

THE READER SPEAKS

(Continued from page 6)

did out of his head, without written calculations or drawings, and when he had a puzzling bit of work he would go to bed and think it out.

So marvelous was the canal considered that people came from all over Europe to see it. The King of Denmark was among them, as were many other famous people, and all expressed wonder at seeing a ship sailing over a bridge, while another sailed beneath it.

The ship may have been only a humble barge and its sailing a matter of being drawn by horses from a towing path beside the water, but it was still wonderful and that at Barton was certainly the first aqueduct built in this country. What was most important, it took the Worsley coal to Manchester.

In view of Bud Gregory, interesting—what? But just to check up on it, we have here Brindley's biographical sketch in the Britannica. It agrees with the excerpt above and goes on to say:

"... The difficulties in the way were great, but all were surmounted by his genius and his crowning triumph was the construction of an aqueduct to carry the canal at an elevation of 39 feet over the river Irwell at Barton. The great success of this canal encouraged similar projects, and Brindley was soon engaged in extending his first work to the Mersey, at Runcorn. He then designed and nearly completed what he called the Grand Trunk Canal, connecting the Trent and Humber with the Mersey. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire, the Oxford and the Chesterfield canals were also planned by him and altogether he laid out over 360 miles of canals. He died at Turnhurst, Staffordshire, on September 30, 1772. Brindley retained to the last a peculiar roughness of character and demeanor; he remained practically illiterate all his life, working without written calculations or drawings."

Which seems to us to be pretty good proof that genius does not consist necessarily of a flock of college degrees or of an "infinite capacity for taking pains"—praise Allah! It comes along too blessed seldom and is all too often smothered by little men in high places who find it frightening.

We had hoped in this issue to print the first of the winners of our amateur magazine contest. Frankly, however, nothing that has come in is of sufficiently high calibre. The only exceptions have been fanzine stories by such well-known professional authors as Ray Bradbury and Leigh Brackett—and it isn't the idea of the contest to run second and third-rate stories by professionals of known standing.

We're still holding it open, so send us in the best you can dig up. We have an idea things will be looking up once we get under way. But we aren't going to wait forever—amen!

OUR NEXT ISSUE

CONTINUING our big-three policy, our next issue, along with short stories and the usual feature quota, will contain a short novel and two novelets. The novel, this time,

(Continued on page 99)



Why be a Papuan?

OUR FRIEND, the anthropologist, told us that only a Papuan could have designed these ceremonial masks. We'd have believed him — except for one thing. We know the man who doodled them . . . just traced the outline of a paper clip and shaded to suit.

Try it. Or better yet — *don't* try it. There's no great demand for Papuans — or for constant doodlers — in the world of business and industry. The demand is for *trained* men and women. The large rewards — promotions, greater responsibilities, increased salaries — go to those who master commercial and technical subjects.

Training in all these fields is available through the International Correspondence Schools. In the time it takes a Papuan to make a mask . . . in the same time many a man spends in doodling . . . *you* can master Plastics or Accounting, Drafting or Radio — any of more than 400 subjects — through study with I. C. S.

If you're as smart as we think you are, you'll act today to obtain full information on the I. C. S. Course in your field of interest. Just mark and mail the coupon and you're in touch with us. Do it *right now!*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS



BOX 3966-K, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X:

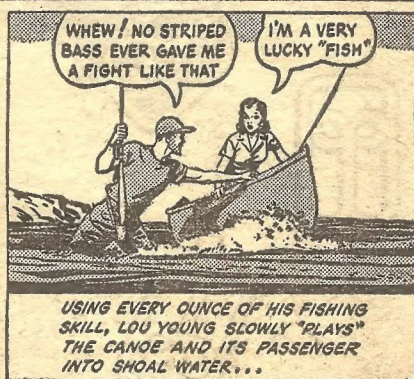
- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Metallurgy | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heating <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Fitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Telephony | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, General | <input type="checkbox"/> Mold-Loft Work | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating | <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaking—Wood, Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Business and Academic Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Servicing | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Shop Blueprints | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Arithmetic <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum Refining <input type="checkbox"/> Plastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Fitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Designing | <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Public Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Light and Power | <input type="checkbox"/> Toolmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> Welding—Gas and Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge and Building Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Electrician | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Tax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Combustion Engines Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brake <input type="checkbox"/> Car Inspector | <input type="checkbox"/> First Year College |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Locomotive | <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship <input type="checkbox"/> French |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel-Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Good English <input type="checkbox"/> High School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Fireman | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Section Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer | <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineering Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Structural Blueprints | <input type="checkbox"/> Aircraft Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilermaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Flight Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Combustion Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Lettering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundry Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Engine Running | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Electric <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engines | |

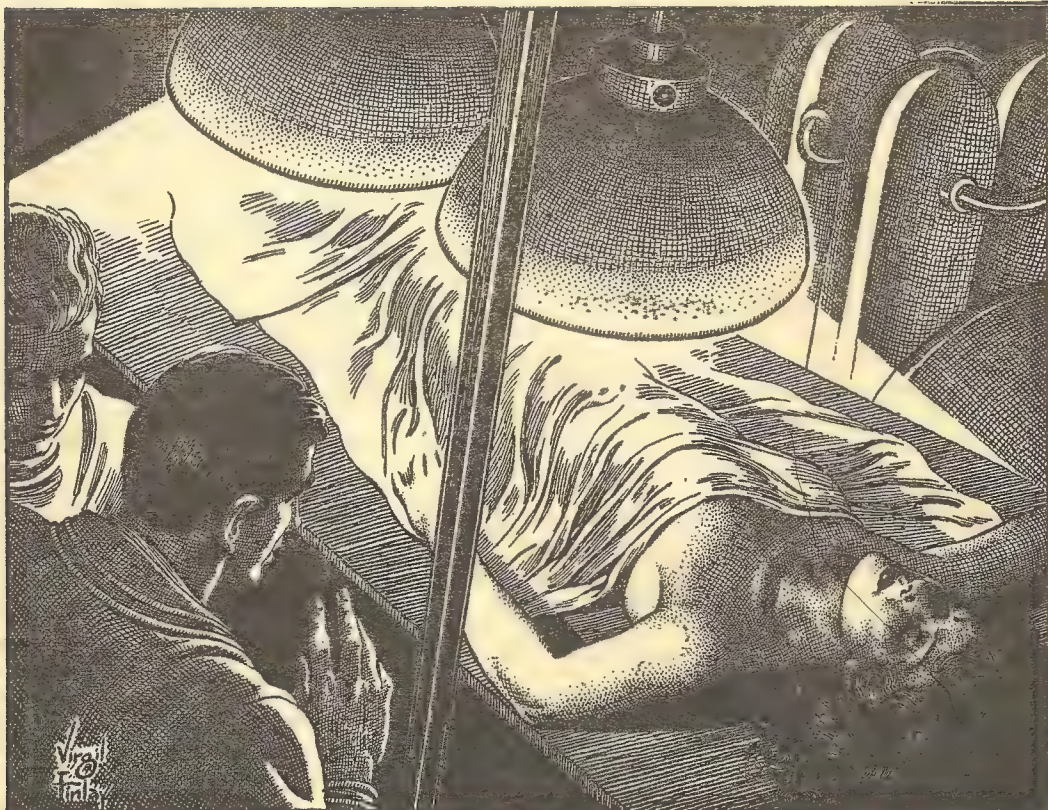
Name _____ Age _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Present Position _____

Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M. Length of Service in World War II _____

Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces. Enrollment under the G.I. Bill of Rights approved for War II Veterans.
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.

IT WAS MORE THAN "FISHERMAN'S LUCK" WHEN...





The girl was supine on a dais, under gleaming orange light (CHAP. III)

Donovan Had a Dream

By JAMES MacCREIGH

When Venus is ruled by a matriarchy of Hags, a quartet of gallant rebels seizes the weapons that can topple tyranny!

CHAPTER I

The Place Called Nard

IT WAS a beautiful city from a distance, the place called Nard. The cloud layer hung a mile overhead and the white towers came almost up to it. You came out of one of the little feeder canals on your canalcraft and there it was, ahead of you. Pure, miraculous white, a city for angels.

"It's the Hags," Hanley said suddenly. "They spoil it."

The narrow-faced man called Valentine stared at him. "Spoil what?" he asked.

"The whole planet." Hanley gestured around him. "Look at this place we're in. A cellar, fixed up with a bar and tables and a couple of dancers who couldn't make a living on Earth. Noise and smoke—dirty glasses with cheap liquor. . . ."

Valentine grinned leanly. "That's treason,"

AN AMAZING SCIENTIFICTION NOVEL

he commented. "You can't talk about the Hags like that. Besides, it's not their fault."

"No?"

"No. They didn't build this place. They don't make you come here."

"There's no other place to go!"

Valentine shrugged. "Not for the likes of us, no," he admitted. "But there never was a place for men like you and me." He looked around him, at the drunken canalers and their white-faced women. "This is as good a place as any. On Earth there are better places, sure. Cleaner and quieter and the dancers know how to pick up their feet. I've seen them—though you have not. I liked them, but I couldn't stand it for long. That was what they call civilization, Hanley. Civilization means law. Would you like to be law-abiding?"

The broad-shouldered Hanley started, almost spilling his drink in consternation. "Law-abiding? Not me!" he said sincerely.

Valentine nodded and leaned back in his chair. Out in the center of the floor a pair of dancers were going through gymnastic contortions. Silver-haired and slim, the girl spun out of her partner's arms halfway across the floor, stopping near Valentine's table. As she posed there for a second her eyes caught Valentine's gray ones and she gave him the imperceptible performer's smile of greeting. Then the music surged and she spun away.

"Hope Darl didn't hear what you said about dancers." Hanley grinned. "She's smitten."

Valentine picked up his glass and held it to the light. "I wasn't talking about her," he said lazily, watching the milky green opalescent shimmer. "She could do better than this if she wanted to. Don't personalize everything, Hanley."

Hanley pursed his lips, looking at Valentine wonderingly. He too swallowed his drink before he spoke. "How come you live like this, Valentine?" he asked.

"Like what?"

"Like"—Hanley gestured—"like an outlaw. You could be a successful man if you stayed on Earth, Valentine. You talk like a man who's had an education. Yet you hang around this dirty little city on Venus, skirting the edge of the law. It's a good life for me, I guess—I don't know any other. But you. . ."

There was a faraway look in Valentine's brooding eyes, focused on a table across the

smoke-filled room. "Look at that girl," he said suddenly. "The Earthgirl with the Space Fleet ensign."

"The pretty one? What about her?"

"She is pretty, isn't she? But look at her face. You can tell how she has spent her life."

Hanley nodded. "She's been rich—is that what you mean? Rich and powerful. It shows."

"That's what I mean. All her life she's been surrounded by luxury, and she couldn't live for a day if she were alone in the swamps." He set down his glass and faced Hanley. "That's Earth for you," he said. "Soft, and haughty, and weak. Venus is no better, but at least here I can do almost as I like. So I go out into the swamps and bring in bellflowers, and you pass them on to some illegal distillery or other, evading the Hags' tithe, and we both have enough money to do as we please."

Hanley grimaced. "Let's not talk so loud about it," he begged.

THE dancers had left the floor and the trickety orchestra was hammering out a dance number. The Earthgirl got up to dance with the youth in Space Fleet blue. Valentine sighed.

"She's still a pretty girl," he said. "Let's have another drink."

"Who's a pretty girl?"

Valentine looked up. The dancer was standing over him, smiling, still wearing the gold-and-scarlet silks of her dancing costume.

"Hello Darl," he said. "I meant you, of course. There isn't a prettier girl in Nard."

A waiter brought a chair over hastily and the girl sank down into it. "You always know the right thing to say," she murmured. "But why didn't you say it to me instead of to Hanley?"

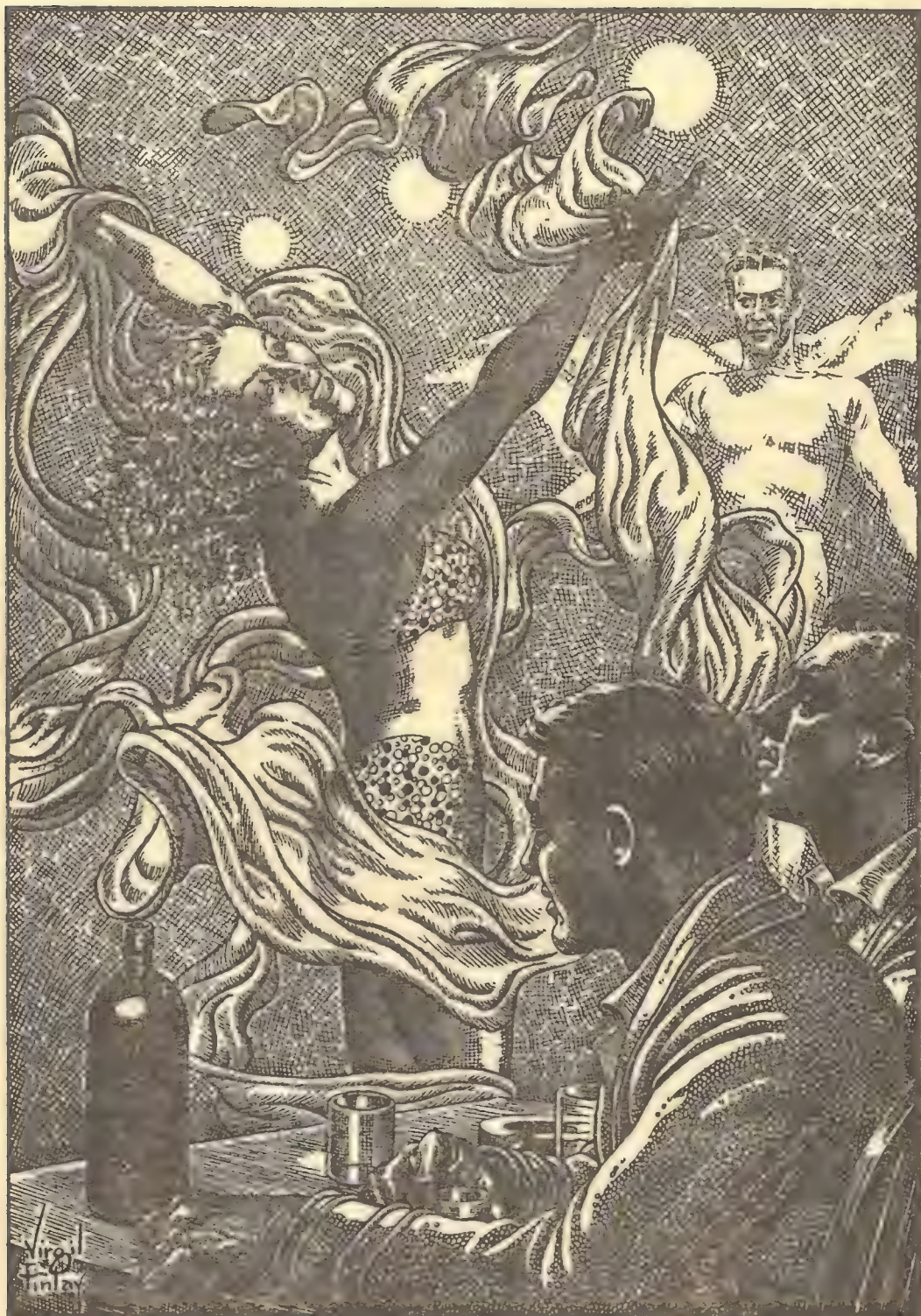
Valentine coughed and detained the waiter. "What would you like?" he asked hurriedly.

She shrugged. "Flower-dew, I suppose. That's what you've been drinking."

Hanley growled, "I'll take whisky. Let's make this one the last, Valentine. We have business."

The waiter vanished and came back with the drinks.

"You needn't be pointed," Darl said. "I can't stay long anyhow. I have to change for my next number. It's something new,



The girl spun out of her partner's arms and her eyes caught Valentine's (CHAP. I)

Valentine— I wish you could stay and see it."

"Something new?"

"An importation from Earth—an old medieval folk-dance that's being revived. They call it the samba."

"Sounds fascinating," Hanley said. "I'm sorry, but. . ."

"Oh, maybe we can stay," Valentine said. He was looking out over the floor again. "Meanwhile, Darl, let's dance a little. It'll keep you in practise."

"Meaning that I need practise?" she said.

They rose and she walked before him to the floor. The band was still blaring at top speed. They fell into the rhythm of it and moved across the floor.

Darl looked up at him. "Have I told you lately that you missed your vocation?" she asked. "You should have been a dancer. You can dance with me any time. By the way, what is your vocation?"

"I'm retired," Valentine said. "Easy. . . ." He guided her dextrously among the other couples on the floor. She relaxed against his arm, her eyes half closing.

She felt a nudge from behind and stumbled. Startled, she stared reproachfully up at Valentine.

"I'm sorry," he was saying. "That was clumsy of me."

They had bumped right into another couple—the Earthgirl and the boy in Space Fleet blue. The ensign said, "That's all right," ungraciously, and was about to dance on.

Valentine stopped him. "It was really my fault," he said. "Can we buy you a drink to make up for it?"

The ensign's blond brows lifted. "That's not necessary," he said.

Valentine put a hand on his shoulder. "No, I insist," he said softly.

It was the Earthgirl who spoke. She stood regarding Valentine for a fraction of a second with honest curiosity. Then, "I have a better idea," she said, "let's buy *them* a drink, Van."

The ensign shrugged petulantly. "If you like," he said. To Valentine, "May we?"

"Certainly," Valentine said. The four walked off the floor to the table the Earth couple had occupied. As soon as they had ordered, Valentine said, "I noticed you from across the floor. It's not very often that we see Earthpeople here in Nard."

The ensign permitted himself a smile.

"You'll be seeing more of us in the future," he said.

"Really?" Valentine showed genuine interest.

"Sure." The ensign took a deep swallow of his drink. "You'll be seeing more than you ever saw in your life before."

Valentine shook his head gently. "I saw a million and a half Earthmen in the streets of New York, waiting to hear the results of a duel between two professional ray-gun killers," he said.

"Oh, then you've been to Earth," the Earthgirl said. "How did you like it?"

"I admired the beautiful cities, and the immense factories. I didn't think much of the entertainment."

The girl frowned in mock astonishment. "Surely you don't object if two professionals try to kill each other. I understand that all sorts of killing goes on here on Venus. And the people that get killed aren't even being paid for it—it's the Hags killing the Donovans, or the Donovans killing helpless citizens."

"You've been a little misinformed," Valentine said politely. "Is that why you came to Venus? To see some of the killing?"

The ensign laughed explosively. "No. We came on business."

"Mixed with a little pleasure, of course," the girl added swiftly, "In fact, I'm afraid it was almost pleasure. But tell us some more about your reactions to Earth."

They conversed for a few minutes. Valentine conscientiously ignored the spectacle of Hanley across the room, staring incredulously at the foursome. Then Darl said:

"I've really got to change now. If you'll excuse me I'll go."

VALENTINE rose with her and walked as far as the door to the dressing room, after offering the conventional thanks for the drink. Then he sat down next to Hanley.

Hanley regarded him with open anger. "What's going on?" he demanded. "Do you know what time it is?"

Valentine nodded. "Drink your drink, and I'll tell you all about it."

Hanley grunted and lifted the glass to his lips. He held it there, then sat bolt upright. "What the heck!" he murmured. He pointed to the entrance. "Look. What are *they* doing here?"

Valentine turned around. Every eye in the place was on the entrance as three new per-

sons came in.

They moved in disdainful silence, like lily-white swans floating through mire. The first two wore the white casques of their mysterious order, hiding their features. The third was a mournful-eyed girl of nineteen in the scarlet-edged robes of a novice.

"Imagine!" Hanley said. "I never heard of the Hags coming to a place like this before. Maybe they're human after all."

"Or maybe they're after something," Valentine said, his face drawn. "I wish I knew what."

The first Hag threw her casque back, revealing the lean face of a middle-aged woman. She looked about her, beckoned imperiously to a waiter in a stained apron. He approached her uncertainly.

There was a rustle of silken garments behind Valentine, and Darl was back. "Do you see who's here?" she whispered venomously. "Vultures! I hate those—"

"We all do," Hanley said hastily. He waved at the dance floor, where the half-intoxicated canalers had noticed the Hags and were unanimous in their hostile looks. "I'll bet they haven't got a friend in the place."

The waiter listened uncertainly while the first Hag said something peremptory and short to him, then he hurried off toward a door at one end of the bar. Valentine looked after him thoughtfully.

"Darl," he said without looking at her, "how would you like to do me a favor?"

"Sure."

"Find out what they want."

DARL looked at him uncertainly. She shrugged. "All right." She was on her feet swiftly.

Hanley said, "Valentine, I hate to repeat myself but it's time—"

"I won't be long," he promised. "I'm curious about this."

Darl intercepted the waiter before he reached the door, returned almost immediately. Her eyes were apprehensive.

"They're looking for somebody," she said. "Jay didn't know what they want him for. Valentine, have you been. . . ."

Valentine pursed his lips. "Not that I remember," he said.

"Oh, Valentine—don't get into trouble with the Hags. They're horrible. They arrested me once. I know what they're like."

Valentine waved his hand. "I won't get

into trouble," he said. "Are you ready, Hanley?"

"It's about time," Hanley grumbled. Valentine dropped a bill on the table to cover their drinks, then got up.

"I'll be back, Darl," he promised.

"Tonight?"—eagerly.

"In a couple of days. Good-by."

Valentine noticed the Earthgirl putting on her cloak as he went out. Evidently she was leaving too.

"We're late," Hanley said. "Let's hurry."

The two men walked briskly along the wide street, dimly lighted with luminous disks set in the white-walled buildings. Above, the hanging clouds reflected the more brilliant lights of the center of the city.

"What was it that Darl said about being arrested by the Hags?" Hanley asked.

"It happened a year ago. They picked her up, held her a couple of days, let her go. Never said a word of explanation. She didn't like the Hags much before that—but now she hates them."

They turned into a small street, then into what was almost an alley. They were in the poorer section of Nard now, a place where laborers lived and worked. The buildings were old and small compared with those in the center of the city.

Valentine greeted the man in the black plastic ray-tunic of the police who lounged on the wharf beside his craft, then stepped into it. Hanley followed, with dubious looks at the guard. Ranged against the cushioned seats at the back of the speedbarge were four baled objects—the bellflowers. Their spiced scent was unmistakable. The guard grinned broadly, turned and walked away.

"Here you are," Valentine said. "Now where's your man to take them off my hands?"

"He'll be here," Hanley promised. "Let's get the bales up on the wharf if you're sure it's safe."

"Safe as the secrets of the Donovans," Valentine said. "Even the Hags can't find those out."

The two men worked quickly and in moments the bales were stacked beside the boat. They climbed out. Hanley plucked a bellflower petal out of a bale and chewed it reflectively.

"Look over there," he said, pointing. "What do you make of that?"

Valentine looked. "What?" A low-wheeled car purred down toward them along the

canal street, stopped at a shabby building not far away. Two persons got out, a man and a girl. At that distance it was hard to identify them but the man was in blue uniform.

"Our friends from the cafe!" Valentine said. "Wonder what they're doing here? That's—oh, I understand. See the Earth-sign?"

Hanley nodded as his eyes took in the two interlocked squares that gleamed faintly over the entrance to the building.

"An Earth storehouse, huh? I can see why the boy wonder would be down here—in charge of a shipment, maybe. But how about the girl?"

Valentine shrugged. "It doesn't make sense to me either," he conceded. "But these Earth-girls—oh, here comes your man."

CHAPTER II

Man Meets Donovan

A SHORT man was walking rapidly toward them, his face tense. As soon as he got within earshot: "Sorry I'm late," he said. "I had a little trouble." He was obviously uneasy, eyes squinted and blinking.

"What kind of trouble?"

The man spat expressively. "The Hags," he said. "I don't know how much longer this little deal of ours is going to work. I've got an uneasy feeling. The Hags are searching for the still."

"Searching?" Hanley repeated. "That's bad. Will they find it?"

"Not unless they look somewhere else."

The man sighed and regarded the bales meditatively. "They were looking in my house. I'm not crazy enough to keep the still there. But it looks like they've got a line on me."

Valentine nodded. "Well, do you want to take this batch?"

The man spread his hands morosely. "I have to," he said. "My customers are waiting." He widened a gap in the sacking of the bales, peered at the exposed bellflowers. "Looks all right. Wait just a minute."

He turned his back and walked across the street to where a light cargo car was parked, drove it over to them. The three men

together heaved the bales into its cargo space.

They had just finished when the short man froze. "Watch out," he whispered. "Look who's coming."

Valentine gave him a quick glance, then relaxed. "Oh, the policeman," he said. "Don't worry about him. He's a friend of mine—I pay him more than the Hags do." But the guard seemed anxious as he approached.

He said, "I thought I'd better tell you. There's a robot coming this way. It just came over the talker." He patted the portable two-way radio he carried.

"A robot?" Hanley grunted.

"Yeah. Coming fast."

Hanley's business associate gurgled in his throat.

"They're out for blood," he said. He stood there uncertainly. "I've got the stuff already. I might as well stay with it." He shrugged and his hand went into his pocket for a wad of colored paper, which he gave to Hanley. "I'll let you know later if I'm still in business," he said. He got into the cargo car and was gone.

Hanley looked after him. "Well, what now?" he asked.

"I don't know," Valentine admitted. "Maybe you and I will have to find a legal way of making a living after all." His eyes strayed past Hanley, looking down the street. "We're stuck—look."

Hanley turned and followed his glance. "It wasn't a false alarm, was it?"

Far down the street, beyond the worried back of the guard, a figure was approaching rapidly. It was large, menacing—and not even remotely human.

The serf-robots of the Hags were huge creatures—round-bodied, capped at the shoulders with a many-eyed dome, borne upon a pair of stiltlike metal legs. They had no intelligence in the sense that a man is intelligent but they could respond instantly to radio-control from afar, and what they saw and heard was transmitted to the person controlling them.

The policeman, now a hundred yards away, turned and gave them a fleeting look of warning. Valentine nodded.

Hanley asked apprehensively: "Do you think it's after us?"

"I don't know," Valentine said. "We'll find out."

The creature bore down upon them, then halted in the middle of the street. It seemed

to listen to an inaudible order, then whirled and dashed into one of the buildings.

"It wasn't looking for us, then," Hanley observed with heartfelt relief. "Well, thank heaven for that."

Valentine was frowning. "Now I wonder what it *was* after."

"Bellflower smugglers like us. That's what the guard—"

Valentine snorted. "In there? That's an Earth depot."

Hanley grunted, staring. It had been the Earth-marked warehouse into which the robot had dashed.

"Well, I guess not. Say! The car's gone. Our friend must have left."

"I noticed that. Wish I knew what was going on."

"It's no business of ours," Hanley protested. "Let's go."

"All right. Go ahead, Hanley. I'll see you later. I'm going to find out what that robot's after."

"What do you care? You're just looking for trouble." The puzzled, half-comprehending look was in Hanley's eyes again.

"I do care, though," Valentine said. "That's what matters right now. Go ahead—travel."

VALENTINE waited a half second after Hanley had melted into the shadows of the goods piled on the other side of the street. He ran lightly across the street, down toward the Earth warehouse. He paused in the doorway to make sure no one was watching, then silently slipped inside.

He was in a dusty office with covered writing machines and desks, completely deserted. Valentine heard no sound anywhere. He blinked, then walked softly across the small room to a gaping double door.

Inside was impenetrable blackness, a large storeroom of some kind. Valentine could sense, rather than see, metal crates stacked along the wall by his side. A heap of them before him blocked his vision.

He stood silent, trying to match the super-sensitive hearing of the robot with his own forest-trained ears. Far off there was a faint scratching sound. He stepped soundlessly forward—and slipped, flailed the air wildly to regain his balance, stood teetering for a second. Something was there on the floor that was liquid and slippery.

His nostrils explained it to him even before he carefully bent down, reached out exploring hands. His fingers touched some-

thing warm and solid—a human body! The reek of human blood flowed around him. Valentine pursed his lips and rose to his feet. He could do no good for the man—and the body was a fresh warning of what his own fate might be.

More cautiously he tiptoed forward. As he neared the end of the stack of crates he detached a faint vertical line of light before him. He peered round the boxes, ready to race for safety at an instant's warning.

Far down the long aisle of crates towered the bulk of the robot. A thin beam of light blazed from a socket in the creature's domed top, flared down on an eight-foot crate held effortlessly in the great tentacles. As Valentine watched, the robot set the crate down, reached for another and examined it.

The electric scanners that were its eyes took seconds to grasp the stenciled characters on the box, even with the aid of the light. Valentine wondered whether, somewhere in the brooding city, a Hag sat watching a tele-screen reflecting the things the robot saw, or whether it was on its memory tape alone that the image was recorded.

From behind him there came a crash.

Valentine whirled, his eyes staring into blackness. There was a scrambling noise, then silence. But the robot had heard too! The floor-jolting strides of its massive feet jarred him into action.

His mind raced desperately. Better to face the unknown danger behind him than the sure annihilation by the robot! He darted back around the crates, stumbling crazily in the blackness. He plunged into the office, reckless of the danger. Amazingly, it was empty! And the wide door to the empty bright street stood open.

But he slid to a halt on impulse. He dodged toward the corner of the office and slipped under a desk. The robot would be sure to catch him in straight pursuit in the street. But if he remained hidden and very quiet. . . .

Clattering like a boiler-factory on the run, the robot pounded through the office. Only a single cursory sweep of its search-beam it gave to the office before it hurtled on through the door. It paused irresolutely outside. Then its earphones picked up the footsteps of some luckless pedestrian and it was off in a mechanical rush in pursuit.

Valentine came cautiously out from under the desk, listening. If the monster's search carried it far enough away it would be possi-

ble to escape. Otherwise. . .

"Valentine!"

The voice was a whisper, from the open door to the storeroom.

"Hanley!" Valentine gasped in recognition. "I thought you. . ."

"I know what you thought," Hanley said apologetically. "Are there any more robots around?"

"I don't think so. What are you doing here?"

There was a repetition of the scrambling noise.

Valentine, coming nearer, knew that Hanley was climbing down from the top of the heap of crates.

"I thought it was safer up there after I tripped," he excused himself. "I guess I messed things up, huh? I thought you might need some help, so I followed you. Then I stumbled over this kid here, and when I got up I knocked one of these crates over."

"You stumbled over the dead man?"

"Dead? No—I listened, and heard the heartbeat. Look, Valentine, let's get her out of here. She's not dead—and she's not a man!"

THE dark clouds overhead were beginning to grow light with dawn as they pushed the canalcraft away from the jetty, sent it slicing the unrippled surface of the water and out into the middle of the canal.

"Where to?" Hanley asked from the wheel. "My place down at the edge of the city?"

"We'll go there first," Valentine said. "I'll drop you off there but the girl and I are going on. I've got a plan for her."

He ignored Hanley's questioning eyes and turned to the girl. He had recognized her instantly as the Earthgirl from the canalers' cafe.

Obviously, she had been knocked out by the great tentacles of the robot. Skin was ripped from her arms, a bloody welt marked the hairline at one side of her face. She had lost much blood.

Hanley had been gentle as he carried her in his powerful arms and the blood had clotted to flow no longer.

"Hand me the kit from the locker," Valentine said. He raised her head, propped it up. With the material in the medical kit he dressed her wounds as best he could. He took out a slim hypodermic, slipped an ampoule of colorless fluid into the barrel,

worked the plunger to puncture the capsule. Then he inserted it carefully into the blue-traced vein at the inside of the girl's elbow, pressed down the plunger. The girl twitched and moaned.

"What's that?" Hanley called from the wheel.

"I'm giving her a shot of nililate to keep her asleep. She'll be a lot less trouble that way."

Hanley frowned. "Listen, Valentine—you can trust me. Where are you going to take her?"

Valentine hesitated, watching the girl. The expression on her face faded into the relaxed mask of slumber as the drug took effect.

He rose to face Hanley. "Maybe you'd better not know," he said. "I trust you. But maybe you'd better do your own guessing."

Hanley shrugged and faced forward. The speedy barge had almost reached the limits of the city. Valentine came forward to take the wheel as Hanley turned it in toward the shore.

"I'll see you in a few days," he promised. "Sorry, but this is important."

"Sure," Hanley said morosely. He relinquished the wheel. Then, "Hold it!" he said sharply. "Look what's waiting for us!"

Valentine's eyes flew to the dock before him.

Standing silent and watchful at the corner of the street which led to Hanley's home was one of the robots of the Hags!

The barge spun around in a sharp turn and Valentine thrust the speed lever forward to the last notch.

"That settles it," he said. "He may have seen the girl. We can't land."

"He might just be standing there," Hanley offered.

"And he might not, too. They could have traced the bellflowers to you—anything. We can't take the chance. I'm sorry, Hanley, but I think you'll have to come along with us now."

"And where are we going?" Hanley asked.

Valentine looked at him with a faint smile. "I think you have a pretty good idea. Why don't you try a guess?"

Hanley nodded slowly and the half-understanding that had been in his eyes became certainty.

"It's the Donovans," he whispered. "You're one of the Donovans, aren't you?"

Valentine nodded and Hanley was silent for several seconds.

"I've been having that idea in the back of my head for a long time," Hanley said. "It's the only thing that made sense. But. . ."

"But what?"

Hanley coughed. "Well, I thought the Donovans were a pretty rough lot. Outside of being pirates, I mean. Of course, all I know about the Donovans is what I heard from the Hags—mind you, I'm not saying they're right. . ."

Valentine shrugged. "We're not even pirates," he said. "Oh, we *have* stopped freight barges once in a while when there was something on them we had to have. But we only stole from the Hags—and they stole the whole planet of Venus from the people."

"But I thought the Hags always flew."

"They do now," Valentine laughed. "We taught them that."

HANLEY nodded. "But how did you get along?"

"Well—did you ever wonder what I did with the money you gave me for bellflowers? We bought a lot of things, and made a lot. We have factories. Everything we ever stole was something the Hags had that we couldn't get any other way. Stuff from their laboratories mostly."

"I had an idea that the Hags exaggerated a little," Hanley admitted. "Well, anything they say is probably a lie, of course. But why do you live in caves in the swamp, like animals?"

Valentine laughed shortly. "You'll see," he promised.

"Oh." Hanley grimaced. "Then I'm going to the Donovan hideout."

"I'm afraid you'll have to. Don't feel badly about it—it's an honor. Only the Donovans have ever been there before."

"And the girl?"

Valentine shrugged, and dropped the conversation.

He turned to look behind him. The Hags had fast canalcraft too, of course, and there was always the possibility of chase. But he saw nothing.

The canal, at this hour of the morning, was deserted.

The girl moaned in her sleep. Valentine sighed and leaned back, holding the wheel loosely.



The robot hurtled through the door, whirled and sped toward them (CHAP. IX)

CHAPTER III

Every Word a Lie

AFTER miles of the straightaway, the canal's course took a wide turn and the white spires of Nard disappeared behind the dense trees. Valentine stretched, sat upright, began to pay attention to the shoreline. His gray eyes roved along the tangled vegetation of the bank. After a moment he changed course slightly, ran the canalcraft in toward the shore in a long slant. Where a bent tangletree hung its weeping fronds far out over the water he cast a quick look behind him, then gave the craft hard right tiller.

"What—" Hanley gasped. Then he understood, as the drooping fronds brushed the top of the craft and he could see behind their screen.

It was another waterway, a hidden one. Apparently it had once been a natural shallow stream, for its course was winding. But it was deep enough for the shallow draft of a canalcraft and careful work had cleared enough of the vegetation to make it navigable without destroying the overhead screen.

"Clever," Hanley said. "And you have your huts under the trees, huh? Moving around from time to time so the Hags won't find you?"

Valentine smiled. "We don't move very often," he said. "This is the original Donovan hideout. It's been here a hundred and fifty years, ever since old Donovan himself took his followers out of the cities."

After a winding, mile-long run under the shrouding trees they drew up to a metal landing stage. Half a dozen canalcraft were moored there already, slim shapes that indicated speed.

Valentine stepped out and raised his hands. "Valentine of the Donovans," he said to an unseen listener. "I have two strangers. I bind myself for them."

There was a rustling in the undergrowth and a man in jungle green stepped out, putting a ray-pencil into its sheath. He stared at Hanley and the girl doubtfully.

"Go ahead, Valentine," he said. "I guess you know what you are doing."

Valentine nodded and beckoned to Hanley,

who handed the girl out to him, then stepped onto the stage himself.

"Lead on," Hanley said. "Here—I'll carry the girl."

She was light enough but Valentine relinquished the chore of carrying her to Hanley's great strength.

"This way," he said, and set off on a narrow path.

Hanley looked about curiously for the huts or caves he had expected. He could see nothing, nothing but the thick trees and tangled creepers that writhed along the ground.

"Here we are," Valentine said. A huge boulder stood beside the path before them. Hanley watched in astonishment as Valentine stood before it.

"Who is it?" a voice asked. Hanley couldn't locate the voice's owner—a hidden microphone, he thought.

Valentine repeated what he had said to the guard at the landing stage. There was a slight electric drone, and the face of the rock opened up before him. Within was a broad, shallow flight of steps going down. Another guard with a ray-rod stood inside the entrance, his hand on a lever.

"Come ahead," he said.

Valentine looked around at Hanley and grinned. "This is our hideout," he said. "Welcome to the Donovan caves!" . . .

The whispered buzz of an interphone awakened Donovan. He was at once alert, though he had slept for less than three hours. He flipped a switch beside his bed and spoke.

A voice replied, "This is Surgeon-of-the-day Carla. I promised I'd call when your Earthgirl was able to talk. Well, she's ready whenever you want her."

"Good," said Valentine. "I'll be right down."

He stepped into a tingling shower and quickly dressed. Just outside his room was a small chamber where a man was seated at a table, idly reading.

"Hello, Valentine," he said. "I sent for some food for you." He gestured toward a group of covered vessels on the table before him.

Valentine nodded and sat down. A tap on the covers of the vessels made them hiss satisfyingly. Then Valentine lifted the lids off easily, revealing food kept warm by units in the lids, kept from spoilage by the vacuum. Pouring a cup of the pale, effervescent liquid, he nodded at the door next to his own.

"Hanley isn't awake yet?"

The guard shook his head. "What shall I do with him when he comes out?" he asked.

"Feed him first, I suppose. After that—well, he'll probably be asking a lot of questions. He was pretty surprised at finding a city as big as this underground. Tell him whatever he wants to know."

"Anything?" The guard raised his brows.

"That's right. He knows too much now if we can't trust him. A little more won't make any difference." Valentine chuckled. "You'd better brace yourself for a hard time. I could hardly get him to go to sleep when we came in—he had an idea we were savages, living in caves."

He quickly finished eating, then walked through broad bright corridors to what a plaque identified as the medical section.

"Hello, Carla," he said to the surgeon of the day. "How's the girl?"

Carla was a slim young man in a white tunic. He hesitated. "She's only had a couple of hours under the vita-rays. Actually it would be better if we kept her there. She's lost a lot of blood."

"You can put her under again afterward, Carla. This is important."

Carla shrugged. "All right. She's well enough to talk now. But try not to get her too excited." He led the way out of the room.

The girl was supine on a dais, under gleaming orange lights. They peered in at her through the crystal wall of the chamber in which she lay. Carla touched a switch outside the entrance and the lights flicked and blanched to normal daylight color. He opened the door and motioned Valentine in ahead of him.

The blood had been washed from her and her cuts had closed. Carla thumbed down a lower eyelid and peered at the pupil. Satisfied, he took a small plastic capsule from a pouch at his waist and expertly crushed it in his fingers, close to the girl's nostrils. A sharp, tingling pungency filled the room. The girl shuddered and almost immediately awoke.

Paying no attention to her, Carla turned to Valentine.

"She'll be all right for a while. Call me when you leave and I'll put her back under the rays."

There was surprise and fear in almost equal proportions in the girl's eyes. Valentine said, "Probably you're wondering where you are."

The girl frowned at him. "You—you're the man who bumped into us in the cafe."

"Yes. My name is Valentine. You were injured last night by a serf-robot belonging to the Hags—do you remember? I found you and brought you here."

The girl pushed herself erect, sat with her legs dangling over the side of the pallet. She regarded him carefully.

"Where is 'here'?" she asked. Valentine noticed again that her voice was exceptionally rich and deep. She was attractive enough, he thought. If her skin hadn't been just a trifle too dark, in spite of the bleaching effect of the vita-rays, she might have been almost beautiful.

He asked, "Have you ever heard of the Donovans?"

"Donovans? Yes, surely. They're the outlaws. The savages who live in huts in the jungle."

VALENTINE smiled ruefully. "It seems to me I've heard that too many times today," he said. "We're not exactly savages. You see, I'm one of the Donovans. This place you're in now is our jungle city."

Her lips parted. "Oh? But I thought—that is, all the Venusians said that—"

"I know what they said," Valentine interrupted. "They said we were outlaws. They're partly right."

The girl nodded hesitantly. Then, remembering, she flexed her arm experimentally. She rubbed it, looked at it. The cuts where the robot had flailed it had closed, leaving only pinkish welts under the regenerative influence of the vita-rays.

"You're quite civilized," she admitted. "I shouldn't have expected vita-rays. I suppose I owe you something for helping me. I'll see that my father rewards you."

Valentine coughed. "That brings up a delicate point. I'm afraid we'll have to keep you here for some time."

"Keep me?" The warmth had gone from her voice.

"Yes. You see, our safety would be endangered if the Hags knew as much about us as you do."

"But what has that to do with me? I'm not a Venusian. I have credentials from the Earth government—a trade mission."

Valentine shook his head impatiently. "Credentials from Earth are worthless here," he said. "The Earth government doesn't even know we exist."

THE girl slipped to her feet, eyes bright and fixed on Valentine's. "I'm Elena Orris," she said softly. "My father is an important man." She examined Valentine's face closely, with obvious vexation that the name made no impression on him. "Do you know what that means?"

"What does it mean?"

"It means that my father can call out the Earth-fleet if you hold me here. The whole fleet—eight thousand battle rockets. Do you know what battle rockets could do to you?"

Donovan said patiently, "You don't understand. The fleet could blast us to shreds, yes. But how would they ever find us? The Hags can't find us, and they've been looking for over a century. As far as anyone on Earth would ever know, you mysteriously disappeared. The Hags won't press the investigation too far. After all, it was their robot that attacked you. They can't be sure you're still alive."

The girl bit her lip and looked at him uncertainly. Then, "Tell me what you want," she said.

"That's better," Valentine applauded. He sat down facing her. "There are some questions I want to ask you. About those crates in the storeroom the robot was so interested in. What was in them?"

"I can't tell you."

"Why?"

Elena Orris hesitated. "I—I can't. I swore an oath. I'm not here as a tourist, you know. This is part of my job. The Earth government sent me to make sure that the goods got here safely. It's important that it be kept a secret."

"It's important to me, too. Who was it for?"

She shrugged. "A man named—Smith. I don't know him."

"Do you know who he's acting for?"

"No."

Valentine stood up, took a step toward her. "I tell you, we Donovans have got to know all about this," he said. "We're not savages. We don't usually force people to talk. But this is different."

The girl gasped. "Are you threatening me?"

"With torture? No. With being made to answer, yes."

"You can't make me answer!"

Valentine smiled humorlessly. "We can try. There's a sort of hypnosis technique we've worked out. It's very good."

"I'll never submit to it!"

"It's not up to you," Valentine explained.

"There's a drug that goes with it so that your cooperation isn't necessary. Unfortunately, it sometimes affects the mind."

The girl winced. "Beast!" she whispered. "I'll tell you."

"Thank you," Valentine said gravely.

"What was in the cases?"

In a dull tone she said, "Atomic explosives. Uranium isotopes and the catalyst to make them work."

Valentine frowned thoughtfully. "What about this man Smith?"

"I don't know much about him. He came to my father on Earth—my father is the Industries Controller for the Earth government. Smith wanted what he called industrial explosives. He offered money and concessions on Venus."

"Strange the Hags couldn't make their own uranium isotopes," Valentine observed. "Venus has plenty of carnotite. I thought I knew all the Venusian officials that work for the Hags but I never heard of Smith."

"It may not have been his real name. But his credentials were good. My father investigated."

"Of course, there's something else about it that's peculiar, you realize. The Hags are the government of Venus. Why would they send one of their robots to pry into something that they themselves had bought and paid for?"

She shrugged. "You know as much as I do. Ensign Drake brought me down to look the shipment over before I went to bed. The guard on duty—an Earthman—complained of some kind of a fever and asked to be relieved. Ensign Drake took him to his quarters to get another man, and I stayed behind to keep an eye on the place. We didn't expect any trouble. I was just waiting for him when—when that robot came blundering in." She shuddered. "I don't think it really meant any harm—not unless I got in its way. It just sort of pushed me aside."

Valentine looked at her thoughtfully, then at his watch. "I must go," he said. "I'll be back. Until then, the surgeon says you'll be better off under the vita-rays. You can do as you like—except that you can't leave."

He left her staring after him. On the way out he stopped to talk to the medic.

"See that she's fed and kept out of trouble," he said. "I'll be back."

"I'll put her to sleep and give her some more rays," Carla promised. "Did she tell you what you wanted to know?"

Valentine grimaced. "She wouldn't tell me a thing at first. I had to threaten to use force on her finally."

"And then—did she talk?"

"She talked." Valentine smiled humorlessly. "She answered every question—and every word she spoke was a lie!"

CHAPTER IV

Alliance Refused

VALENTINE switched the teletalker in his room to *Record* and dictated a full account of what he had seen for the benefit of the council of the Donovans. As he was finishing the story he heard voices outside the door and Hanley came in.

"You've got a wonderful place here, Valentine," he said enthusiastically. "I'm sorry about—you know, about what I said about caves."

"Sure," Valentine said absentmindedly.

"That guy who was outside took me for a walk around. This place is immense—eleven thousand people, he told me. Growing your own food, operating your own factories, everything underground. Wonderful!"

Valentine smiled. "I suppose you know all our secrets now," he said.

Hanley looked embarrassed. "Yeah, I guess so. Look, Valentine. That's something I wanted to talk to you about. Understand, I don't care if I ever go back to Nard—I like it here. But if I do go back I want you to know I won't say a word to anybody."

"We'll be sure of that," Valentine said ambiguously. "Did your escort tell you everything you wanted to know about us?" He sat down and lit a greenish cigarette.

"Well, almost. But there are one or two things. For instance, who runs this place? How did it get started?"

Valentine pursed his lips and blew a long plume of smoke.

"It goes back over a hundred and fifty years," he said. "The Hags rewrote the histories, so you probably don't know much about it. But back in two thousand one hundred and sixty-nine Venus was a colony belonging to Earth."

"Oh, sure. I knew that."

Valentine nodded. "And the Hags were a brand-new order on Earth. They had just

begun operating, oh maybe ten or fifteen years before. They were a sort of a crazy imitation of a religious order—composed of women who thought that men had made a mess of the world. They were brilliant women, of course. Doctors, chemists, physicists—everything."

"Then what?"

"Then they got into trouble." Valentine frowned thoughtfully. "Even we Donovans don't know exactly what they did. I was curious about it when I was going to college on Earth—a lot of us go to Earth for schooling—so I looked in the old records. But all I could find were hints. I think they began using men in biological experiments. And somehow word of it got out, and they were banished from Earth. And they came here."

"To Venus? The government let them come?"

"There was no other place for them. They started a revolution, persuading the colonials that they had been unjustly banished and they could give them democracy and freedom."

"That's a laugh."

"Yes, but it sounded better in those days. There was a lot of justice in what they told the people. Earth had been pretty grasping, looting Venus without compunction. So the people fought their revolution for them and Earth didn't have as big a space fleet as it has now and we won. That is—the Hags won. The people, of course, were no better off than they had been. Maybe worse."

Hanley shifted uncomfortably. "Sure," he said. "That's very interesting. But how about the Donovans? Where'd they come from?"

Valentine stood up. "Let's take a walk around while we're talking," he said. "You can't have seen the whole city."

"Sure," Hanley said, rising and following him through the door. They walked down a broad, brilliantly lighted corridor toward a large chamber where many people were moving about. "You were telling me where the Donovans came from," he reminded.

"There was a man named Jeremiah Donovan," Valentine said. "He was one of the leaders in the rebellion. He preached democracy to the people and they followed him. When the revolution was won he began trying to put democracy into practice and the Hags arrested him as a traitor."

"How do you like that? After he fought for them."

"He escaped, though. He tried to fight the Hags. It was a good fight but they had everything on their side. About a hundred and fifty men were left after a month of it and they followed Donovan out into the swamps. They built this city—or began it, anyhow. At first the story about the caves was true."

Hanley nodded and stared about him. They were in an immense underground chamber. A deep pool of crystalline water was at one end of it and men and women were swimming or lounging about under the bright sunlamps on the dome forty feet overhead. Others were moving about purposefully from corridors opening into the chamber to booth-like affairs in the chamber itself.

Hanley said, "With all these people, why can't you come out into the open? You must outnumber the Hags."

"But they have robots," Valentine explained. "We don't."

"Can't you make them?"

"We're trying. But we aren't having much success because we can't duplicate the alloy the Hags use in the electronic brains. Duplicate it? We don't even know what it is!"

"Can't you—well, capture one?"

"We have. In fact—" he hesitated—"in fact, we've captured several different types."

"Different types? But I've only seen one kind."

Valentine nodded. "I think the others are experimental. One was built into an aircraft that crashed. It ran the plane. And on the same ship were three or four little ones. Really little—about the size of a pinhead."

Hanley whistled. "Wonder what they were for."

Valentine said wryly. "So do we. We've taken them apart and analyzed them and we still don't know what we've got. They were just the brains of the robot—the radio cell that controls it."

THEY sat down on a broad bench next the pool. Valentine stared into the water thoughtfully.

Hanley said, "How come you know so much about the Hags?"

"Oh, various ways. We monitor their radio—hear everything they broadcast. And we keep a couple of men close to their palace in Nard. But they're smart too and we don't find out as much as we'd like to."

"Oh." Hanley fell silent for a moment, watching the people of the underground city. "What's that place over there, where all the

people are coming and going?"

Valentine looked. "That's the Council Hall. The government of the city is handled there. By the Council of the Donovans. I'm a member of the Council. There are thirty-five of us." He smiled ruefully. "By rights I should be in there now, answering questions for them."

"What questions?"

"Questions about the Earthgirl. But I don't know the answers to them. Questions like what is she doing on Venus, and what's in those crates, and—"

Hanley interrupted by snapping his fingers. "Me and my memory," he grunted. "I knew there was something I wanted to tell you." He fished in a pocket, pulled out a couple of flat silvery disks and handed them to Valentine.

"What are these?" Valentine asked, fingering them curiously.

Hanley grinned. "While I was up on the crates—remember?—I knocked one over and broke it open. It spilled all over. I picked these things up. The crates were full of them."

WHEN Valentine walked in Elena was sitting on the dais in the crystal room, furiously smoking a cigarette. As soon as she saw him she burst out:

"I'm going insane! Why don't you let me out of here? I've told you what you wanted. Now keep your end of the bargain. Let me go!"

Valentine looked at her coldly for a second. "We made no bargain. And if we had you didn't keep it."

"I didn't keep it?"

"Yes. I asked you what was in those crates."

Elena Orris opened her eyes wide. "Of course. I told you—they're supposed to contain industrial explosives. My father's men inspected them just before we left."

Valentine laughed aloud. "You're magnificent," he said. Then, opening his hand to display what he held: "Look. Is this your industrial explosive?"

The girl stared at the disk incredulously. "You—but where—" Abruptly the strength seemed to flow out of her. She looked up at Valentine helplessly.

Valentine sat down facing her. "Start telling me the truth now," he ordered. "The real truth—bearing in mind that twenty minutes ago this thing was in several pieces

and one of our radio techs was telling me all he could about it. Or do we have to use the drug?"

Elena said sullenly, "I'm not a radio tech. I don't know very much about them."

"Tell me as much as you do know. Who were they for?"

She said, "They are for—for the Earthmen on Venus."

"Earthmen?"

"Yes. The Embassy staff. Commercial missions. Every Earthman on Venus—almost a thousand of them. Most of them right in Nard."

Valentine frowned. "And what are the Earthmen going to do with them?"

"That's the part I don't know," Elena said flatly. "They—they had something to do with robots."

"With the Hags' robots?" Valentine's face was impassive but his mind was racing. "You mean with the radio-control of the robots? Some radio device...?"

"I think so. I think these things interfere with the radio-waves between the robots and wherever they're controlled from. I heard my father talking about them once. He called them 'wavetraps'. They just sort of reach out and absorb radio waves."

Valentine said slowly, "And that would mean that the robots would be helpless. They'd be blind, deaf and paralyzed." He took that thought in silently, liking it, hardly daring to believe it. So powerful a weapon... "What were you supposed to do with these things?" he asked.

"Just bring them here. Ensign Drake was actually in charge of them but I was sent along to watch Ensign Drake. He was going to turn them over to the Embassy staff tomorrow."

Valentine stared at her curiously. "That doesn't strike you as being unethical?" he asked. "To just attack like that?"

"Unethical?" she echoed. "Are the Hags ethical?"

"You have a point," he admitted. He turned the idea over in his mind. Mechanisms to paralyze the robots, meant for the Earth Colony on Venus. An Earth plot—a plan to wrest the planet away from the Hags, make it again a colony of Terra!

He looked soberly at the girl. Absently he noticed that she was strangely pale—then he remembered she had been under the vita-rays. Life moved faster under the vita-rays. Without compensating ultra-violet, her newly-regenerated skin was pale, bleaching as much in a few hours as it might otherwise have done in months.

She watched him uncertainly. Then her expression changed as a new thought crossed her mind. "Valentine!" she said eagerly. "I have an idea! You hate the Hags, don't you?"

He laughed. "I couldn't love them."

"We hate them too! Oh, Valentine, why can't we join forces? As allies we couldn't lose!"

"Allies? The Earth government—and we outlaws?"

"Certainly! Earth would help you. With our Space Fleet, our weapons, you could destroy the Hags in a few days. They could be wiped out completely—and you could come out of hiding."

Valentine listened without changing expression. He said, "And what would happen after that? What does Earth want from Venus?"

Elena Orris spread her hands. "Only friendship," she said persuasively. "Friend-

[Turn page]



... ITS QUALITY

HITS THE SPOT! ★

ship and trade. Venus has millions of tons of radioactive ore—I'll be truthful with you, Valentine. We need it. Our mines are running low."

"Can't you get it from the Hags without overthrowing them?"

"We've tried. They won't listen to reason. Undeveloped resources that mean life to Earth—and the Hags won't let us develop them. That's all we want. Nothing that will hurt Venus, just—"

"Just the chance to make it a colony again," Valentine finished for her. "You used the wrong word. You don't want allies—you want slaves!"

CHAPTER V

Escape

ELENA recoiled from him, anger in her eyes. She whispered, "Don't forget, swamp-dweller, Earth can take what it needs! Help us and we'll reward you. Try to stop us and you'll be exterminated along with the Hags!"

Valentine nodded his head unwillingly. He admitted, "Unfortunately there's some truth in what you say. If you can stop the robots you can take over the planet—and Earth will be more dangerous than the Hags to us."

"Well? Why not accept my proposition?"

Valentine said patiently, "For two reasons. First, I can't speak for all the Donovans and you can't speak for Earth. Second, I'm not sure you can stop the robots."

"Don't worry about it," Elena boasted. "The wave-traps work. The Hags have only one type of robot—we know that. We tried it out. It stopped the robot cold."

"Oh." Valentine studied her thoughtfully. "Are you sure that the Hags only have the one type?"

"Positive! We've had reports from agents in the Hag Palace itself."

Valentine nodded noncommittally and stood up. "Well, there's only one thing to do," he said. "I'll report what you say to the Council of the Donovans. If they agree I'll come and tell you." He nodded a farewell and turned toward the door.

"Wait!" Elena Orris sprang after him. "Don't leave me in this jail! I hate it!"

Valentine looked at her in surprise. "Where

do you want to go?"

"Back to Nard! You can see why I must. That robot was prying into the crates. I want to find out what he discovered."

Valentine shook his head. "You're being absurd. Obviously we can't let you go. No one but the Donovans knows about this place and we can't take a chance that you might tell the Hags about it."

"Good heavens!" She stamped her foot in anger. "Are you deaf, Valentine? I told you that you and I would fight the Hags together. Why would I turn you over to them when I need your help?"

"Oh, you might find some reason," Valentine said. "No, you'll have to stay here for a while. Later on we'll see."

Hanley was open-mouthed when Valentine switched off the recorder and turned to him. "Was all that stuff true?" he asked. "Are the Earthies planning to take us over?"

Valentine grinned. "The Earthgirl said so. I think this time she was telling the truth."

"Well, what are we going to do about it? They'd be as bad as the Hags."

"Worse," Valentine admitted. "I don't know what we'll do. The Council of the Donovans will have to decide. They'll meet in a few hours. Meanwhile. . ."

"Yeah?"

"Meanwhile you and I can take another look around Nard." He scrutinized Hanley's face carefully. Slowly, "You see, I'm taking your word that you're on our side now."

"Oh, I won't spill anything, Valentine."

"I know you won't. And anyhow I have to take the chance."

"What are we going to do in Nard?"

"Look around. We'll take up where we left off last night."

Hanley grimaced. "I hope the Hags don't remember what we look like," he said. "Suppose they've still got a robot in the depot?"

"That's what we have to find out. Those crates are important. If the Hags have a good look at them, they know something's up. And I'm afraid they've had their look."

"I'm with you," Hanley said. "I don't see much future in it, though. If the Hags find us poking around in a thing like that—"

The interphone buzzed sharply, interrupting him. Valentine flicked the switch, said, "Go ahead."

"Valentine!" a voice crackled. "This is the guard post at Main Gate. The Earthgirl just knocked out the guard here and got away!"

VALENTINE looked over the shoulder of the medico who was working on the guard. "What was it?" he asked.

"Some kind of a drug. I'll have him around in a minute."

The guard commander said, "There are five men out patrolling for her. She can't get very far."

"How did she get up here in the first place?" Valentine asked him.

"Carla called from the surgery a minute ago. One of his men found him unconscious. When they woke him up he said he was all set to put her to sleep but she snatched the nihilate needle out of his hand. That's all he remembers."

"She must have done the same thing to the guard," Valentine conjectured, his brows drawn. He turned to look at the guard, who was stirring, shaking his head. He opened his eyes.

"That girl! She stabbed me," he said.

"With a nihilate needle," Valentine said. "How did it happen? Weren't you on the watch for the Earthgirl?"

"Earthgirl?" the guard repeated. "She didn't look like an Earthie. She wasn't dark, and there wasn't anything about her clothes. . . ."

"The vita-rays," Valentine said. "They bleached her. Well, it doesn't matter. What did she do?"

The guard shakily stood up. He said, "She just came up to me without saying anything. I was going to ask her what she wanted, when I saw something shiny in her hand, and—"

The guard officer interrupted them. "Here comes that patrol," he said. As soon as they were close enough, "Where's the girl?"

"She's gone," the first man panted. "Fenwick and Cavally are chasing her. She took one of the barges at the stage."

Valentine paused no longer. "Come on!" he yelled to Hanley. "We'll follow her. There's still a chance."

He dashed down the short jungle path to the landing stage in the hidden canal. No longer were there several neat silvery barges tied up at the side. There were only two and they were adrift. Obviously the girl had stolen one for her escape, cut the others loose. And by the stage, with the fifth man of the patrol bending over him, lay the figure of yet another guard.

"She doesn't care *who* she stabs," Hanley grunted. "Hey, what are you doing?"

Without wasting time Valentine leaped far out over the water into the nearest of the idly floating canalcraft. The vessel bobbed and rocked dangerously under the impact of his weight, but didn't capsize. He quickly seized the controls, started the motor, headed back toward the stage where Hanley stood, gaping.

"Jump in!" he yelled. "She's only got about ten minutes start. Maybe we can still catch her."

Hanley took his words literally and jumped. His heavier weight rocked the craft badly but it only shipped a little water. Valentine opened up the motor and the craft shot ahead through the winding waterway.

If they had come through the devious turns of the hidden stream rapidly the first time this trip was like lightning. Hanley crouched in the back, watching the spray fly past him, dodging the tree branches under which they raced.

"You think we can stop her?" he yelled to Valentine.

"We'll have to try. Maybe the other barge can do it. But if she tells the Hags where the Donovan city is hidden it means war. And we'll lose!"

Abruptly they were at the end of the concealed waterway. The canalcraft burst through the low fronds of the tangle-tree, then made a wide arc as Valentine turned it toward distant Nard. Both men strained their eyes. The barge of the Donovan guards was skirting the bank on the other side of the stream. There was not a trace of the girl's craft in all the length of the waterway.

"She got away!" Hanley gritted.

Valentine shook his head puzzledly. "She must have. But I don't see how. The canal is straight here for miles. She didn't have that much lead. Unless. . . ."

He swung the craft around, slanted in toward the other barge. The men in it were peering under every low-hanging bush and tree at the shoreline.

"Any sign of her?" Valentine called.

"Not a trace," the man at the controls of the other barge yelled back. "But she's got to be here. She didn't have time to get all the way down the canal. We'll find her!"

They didn't. They scoured every suspicious-looking clump of bushes for a mile in either direction but they didn't find her. After half an hour, Valentine beckoned to the other barge and they met in midstream.

"Keep on looking," Valentine ordered. "It

looks as though, somehow or other, she got away—but keep looking.”

“What are you going to do, Valentine?”

He said grimly, “If she does get to Nard sooner or later she’ll go to the Hags. So we’ll go to Nard now—and stop her!”

CHAPTER VI

Hag-Bound

NOT without apprehension the two lashed their craft to the canal side at the outskirts of the city and walked in.

It seemed their apprehension was groundless. They walked to the canalmen’s bar where they had been the night before—ever so long before—without untoward event.

It was early afternoon. The place was empty of customers. On one side tables were stacked and the floor was being cleaned. Darl and her dancing partner were going through a new routine to the music of a disgruntled pianist. When Darl caught sight of the newcomers her eyes widened sharply and she broke step, colliding with her partner.

She walked over to Valentine. “I’m honored,” she said. “This is the first time you’ve come here in the day.”

“We came to find out something,” Valentine said seriously. “Darl, did you say last night that you’d seen that Earthgirl before?”

“Why, yes. She’s been here several time.”

“Do you know where she lives?”

“No. Or—wait. Yes, I do. She’s staying at the Marabek. At least I think that’s the hotel. I heard her mention it to the ensign last night.”

“Good girl!” Valentine applauded. “Well, thanks. I’ll be seeing you.”

“Wait a moment!” Darl said stormily. “I’m going with you. I want to know what this is all about.”

“Now, Darl. . . .”

“I want to know! Last night you maneuvered around until you got a chance to talk to her, then you left the same time she did. Now you’re going to visit her. Well, I’m going along.”

“Wait a minute, Darl,” Hanley interrupted. “Honest, this isn’t a romance. Valentine has to keep her from telling something to. . . .” he halted. Darl wasn’t looking at him. Wide-

eyed and frightened, she stared at Valentine.

“I guess I talk too much,” Hanley finished embarrassedly.

Valentine snorted. “I guess you do,” he agreed. “Darl, I’ll tell you the whole story later. Right now I can’t.”

“Oh, no,” Darl said quickly. “Valentine, I knew you were in trouble. The Hags were after you last night. You’ve got to let me help you. I can help—there must be something. Maybe she won’t let you see her. Maybe I can go to her and do whatever you want me to do.”

“There’s something in what you say,” Valentine admitted. He sighed. Earnestly he said, “Darl, you may be getting into serious trouble. Do you realize that?”

She nodded.

Valentine spread his hands. “Then come along,” he said. “I didn’t want to mix you up in this but I guess I’ve got to.”

Darl’s ground-car was parked just around the corner. She made hasty excuses to her partner and the pianist and they started for the Marabek. When the car was moving Darl spoke.

“Can’t you tell me something about this, please, Valentine? I’m worried about you.”

Valentine grimaced ruefully. He said, “I’ve spilled more secrets in the past twenty-four hours than all the rest of the Donovans have in a hundred and fifty years. I guess I can tell one more.”

“The Donovans!” Darl echoed. “I thought there was . . . oh, Valentine!”

“Yes, I’m a Donovan,” Valentine admitted. “And the Hags would make it worthwhile for anyone who told them so!”

“I’d never tell! I couldn’t. And you know how I feel about the Hags. Ever since they came and took me to that awful Palace, and kept me there so long and asked me all those questions.”

Valentine nodded. “I’m not worried about you,” he said. “But the Earthgirl’s a different matter. She knows—and she’ll be happy to talk. We had a little run-in last night.”

“Oh?”

“In fact, I practically kidnaped her. I had her in a safe place and she got away. I have to get her again before she sees the Hags.”

“But can’t you hide or runaway—out into the swamps?”

Valentine shook his head. “That wouldn’t even save my own life,” he said gently. “And there’s much more at stake.”

Hanley said, “We followed her in this

morning from that safe place Valentine mentioned. She knows where it is, see?"

Darl bit her lip. "Well," she said presently, "what shall we do? We're only a few blocks from the Marabek—and there's the Hag Palace, right ahead."

"Go to the hotel," Valentine ordered. "Maybe we can find out at the desk whether she's back." He cast a quizzical look at the looming white tower of the Hag Palace. "I can't say I like getting so close to our friends there," he murmured. "Maybe we'd better—hold it! Look!"

HE WAS erect, pointing out the window of the ground car. Darl gasped and the car swerved under her hand. She brought it to a halt.

"It's the girl!"

Hanley stared. "What's she doing here? You think she's going to the Palace?"

Valentine wasted no time. "We can't take any chances. Stay here, both of you, and watch what happens. I'm going to try to stop her!"

"Wait!" Darl wailed but Valentine was out of the car already. Even faster than his body moved his mind was racing—trying to find a plan, a method of kidnapping the girl on the crowded street. On impulse he called to her, "Elena! Elena Orris!"

She was perhaps a dozen yards from him, walking toward the Hag Palace. There was no hurry in her walk. Valentine found time to wonder at that—and then she turned in answer to his call.

Her eyes widened in recognition and her hand flew to her mouth. Instantly she turned, began to run. Valentine, cursing under his breath, ran after her. He was faster than she but they were almost at the entrance of the cloud-high, stalagmitic tower of the Hags and he hadn't the slightest chance of stopping her.

And he was amazed. The girl raced past the entrance without a glance, ran on down the block. Astonishment made him falter, then he saw something which stopped him in his tracks. From the door between the girl and himself came a rushing clatter, and then a group of robots hurtled out, half a dozen of them. Without stopping to look around they raced toward him!

He had only a split second in which to think and act. It was not enough. Frenziedly he grappled for the disklike affair in his pocket to try the desperate gamble of pitting

it against the oncoming monsters but it was too late.

Instantly they were around him. He grunted in pain as the snakelike tenacles of one whipped about his body, squeezing him in a metallic embrace. His hands were pinioned hopelessly and the pocket with the disk was out of reach.

He was lifted into the air. He caught a faint glimpse in his gyrations of the couple he had left, standing paralyzed next to the ground car, watching him. Then the robot rattled and bumped along the street and bore him, helpless, through the open gateway of the Hag Palace. . . .

Valentine stared into the eyes of the hawk-faced woman. She was the one who had been in the cafe, he noted wearily. The robot completed its rough, thorough search of him and bore the trophies to the Hag.

The woman laughed harshly and picked up the silvery disk. "Another one," she said. "We're making quite a collection." She tossed it down contemptuously and leaned forward, staring at him.

"Valentine of the Donovans," she said, "I suppose you know where you are."

"Yes."

"And do you know what is going to happen to you?"

"I have a fair idea," he admitted.

She shook her head silently. "No," she said. "No, you don't have any idea at all. I understand you Donovans aren't as skilled in—shall we say, punishment?—as we."

Valentine stirred restlessly. He said, "Of course we aren't. I confess I don't expect to leave here alive."

She said contemptuously, "Is that all? You don't understand. We probably shan't kill you."

Valentine stiffened silently. *Torture*, he thought—torture to make him tell what they wanted torture for the sake of their holy science, torture for the love of torture itself. . . .

The woman smiled satisfiedly as she saw that he understood. She made as if to rise, then hesitated.

"There are a few minor questions," she said, "I don't think you'll mind answering them. Suppose we get them cleared up before we ask the important ones."

Play for time, Valentine thought. Aloud he said, "Let's hear them."

"What were you doing in the dirty little cafe?"

"Visiting a friend. What were you doing?" he countered.

She raised her eyebrows imperiously but answered. "We were looking for you. Unfortunately we let you get away."

"What did you want me for?" Valentine asked.

The Hag smiled maliciously and shook her head. "No," she said. "You answer the questions. Who was the friend?"

VALENTINE hesitated, then said. "The dancer. Her name is Darl." After all, he thought, they must know that much already.

"Why?"

"Why?" he repeated. "Because I'm a man and she's a beautiful girl. Do you understand a thing like that?"

"I understand it," the Hag said grimly. "I need not believe it." Abruptly she shrugged and stood up. Imperiously, "It will be simpler to ask you questions later. Follow me."

She walked out of the room, not even looking around to see if he followed. With her unarmed back before him and no other person in sight a quick, furtive gleam of hope danced in his mind—a dream of a break for freedom. But it paled and died as he heard the clattering steps of the robot behind him. The woman, he ruefully admitted to himself, took no chances.

It was a short walk. Valentine had a brief glimpse of gray-walled corridors that seemed endless, then they were at the entrance to a large room. Over the woman's slight shoulder as they walked in, Valentine saw rows of steel-barred cages along one wall, flat, white-topped tables that looked ominously like a surgery, a pair of brooding Hags watching them.

In a husky voice like an old man's the smaller of the two waiting Hags asked, "Is this the Donovan?"

"Yes," answered the one with Valentine. "You can take him as soon as you're ready. He—"

She was interrupted by an agonized scream from within the room. Loud, shrill, horrid, the sound seemed to startle even the Hags. The small one gasped something and whirled, ran to one of the cages along the wall, her long skirts flapping around her sticklike legs. She fumbled briefly with an intricate sort of catch, then flung the door open and rushed in.

Valentine, startled enough almost to for-

get his peril, followed her curiously. Inside the cell she was bending over a body—a human body, Valentine saw with a thrill of horror. As he caught sight of it it writhed spasmodically and there was another shriek, louder than before, dwindling into a bubbling guttural. Then the half hidden body slumped and relaxed and the ululation ceased.

With an exclamation of disgust the Hag rose and came out of the cell. She stamped her foot petulantly—and Valentine thought the womanly gesture singularly horrible in that caricature of a female.

"The third one," she said bitterly. "I thought for a while that she'd live—but she died the same way as the others. I think we are a long way from success in this series."

The Hag shrugged impatiently. "Take another subject," she said. "This is ordered. It must succeed."

She noticed Valentine's taut face and stare. Her impatience changed to arrogant amusement. "Donovan, perhaps now you begin to understand," she purred.

White-lipped, in anger as much as apprehension, Donovan asked, "What was that?"

The Hag shrugged. "An experiment. We make many of them. Perhaps you will be an experiment too, some day," she said. "Would you like to avoid that?"

He raised his eyebrows skeptically. "Do I have the choice?"

"Surely. Just open your mind to us," the Hag said. "You Donovans are trouble to us always, out there in the swamps, always silent and threatening. Sooner or later we will have to destroy the Donovans. If you will help us to do it now—you can live."

"And if I don't I die."

The Hag nodded.

Valentine pursed his lips. He seemed lost in thought, staring beyond her at the instrument-covered operating table. He paced absently toward it. "Well," he said thoughtfully, "none of us can live forever."

The Hag scowled and stepped back a pace. "You're a fool, Valentine! she cracked.

She might have said more but Valentine, in his slow, abstracted walk, had got where he wanted to be. He was between the Hags and the door, across the operating table from the three of them. In a decimal of a second his arms slipped under the table, lifted it, heaved.

With a shower of instruments it caught the three of them and bowled them over. Not pausing to see what he had done—hoping

that the shattered glassware and flying scalpels had killed at least one—Valentine spun and ran lightly for the door.

It was a long gamble—and the only one he had left to make. He reached the door, rounded the corner. . . .

He had only a fleeting glimpse of what was waiting for him outside and then the lunging, ponderous metal figure of the serf-robot, the forgotten, impregnable serf-robot, crushed him against the side of the door.

He never saw the tentacle that lashed down upon him. He only felt a stinging whip-crack on his scalp and then he was unconscious.

CHAPTER VII

No Sisters to Him

THERE was another wasp-bite sting, this time in his nose, and Valentine was awake. The small Hag who had made the experiment was looking down at him distastefully.

Valentine struggled up on an elbow and saw that he was back in the surgical room, in one of the cells along the wall this time. The Hag reached down and grasped his wrist contemptuously. After a second's consideration of his pulse she dropped the arm and walked out of the cell.

"Stay there," she flung curtly over her shoulder.

In a moment she was back with the other Hag, the one who had interviewed him when he was first captured. She stared malignantly at Valentine, who was slumped against the wall, still dazed.

"You're meek enough now," she said. "Why don't you try to escape again?"

Valentine said tiredly, "It doesn't seem to do much good."

The Hag nodded. "If there is a next time, it will do you a lot of harm. You hurt three of us!"

Valentine shrugged. "Your robot didn't help me much," he observed. Then, remembering, he put his hand to his scalp. There was no pain, no scar. Only a sort of a tingling there, and at the nape of his neck, that indicated the growth of new, healing flesh. Vita-rays, he thought wonderingly.

He said, "Thanks for the first aid. You take

good care of your—ah—guests."

The Hag waved a hand impatiently. "Talk," she said. "You are given one more chance. You saw what happened to one of our subjects—and we were not trying to punish her. We wouldn't be so dispassionate in treating you."

"Oh, I wouldn't expect it."

"Now you may make your choice. Life or the laboratories."

Valentine raised his head. "What kind of life? Will you let me go free?"

"Of course not. You'll be a captive. We have need for captives sometimes. We'll make only one promise. You will live as long as you would normally and you will not be in pain."

Valentine looked at her speculatively. "You know," he said, "I'm tempted to say yes, just to see what you've got planned for me. I bet it's a beauty." Then he sighed. "But your offer isn't good enough. I'm afraid it never would be good enough either. You see, I'd rather be dead than alive on those terms."

She shrugged—and without disappointment, he saw with surprise. Anxiously she glanced at the watch strapped on her wrist before she spoke.

Valentine thought there was a curious, sardonic light flickering in her webby eyes as she said, "I'll let you think it over. You needn't stay in your cage—you may have the freedom of this laboratory. But don't try to leave it. The three cages to your right contain subjects for one of our experiments. Look them over—it may help you to decide."

She turned and walked out, closing the corridor door behind her. A wait of half a minute and Valentine was at the door. He tried the latch without hope and was not disappointed when he found it locked from outside.

He ranged the walls of the room. Opposite the cages there were only blank walls and cabinets of equipment and instruments. The wall opposite the door was mostly a huge white screen—for viewing microslides, he thought. And the cages offered no escape.

IT PENETRATED that there was no escape. He shrugged and began a search of the cabinets. A weapon, he thought, would be valuable. It was in the third cabinet that he found the workbook. He glanced at it incuriously, was about to toss it back on the shelf when a fluttering page caught his eyes.

He picked it up and read:

Your progress unsatisfactory. The ship is ready and will be dispatched for Ganymede colony within thirty days. It is imperative that we have true-breeding specimens for labor by then.

He frowned at the jagged script. Ganymede colony—were the Hags planning to spread their authority to another planet? And what sort of "true-breeding specimens" were meant?

He opened the book and examined it hurriedly. There was page after page of a sort of shorthand, an abbreviated technical jargon concerning some biological experiments being made. He puzzled over a diagram which showed a human circulatory and respiratory system but with what looked to be a sort of gill arrangement instead of the nose-and-lung of mankind.

A neatly lettered table in the back of the book was more enlightening—and hopeful. It said simply:

2314---	840	Novitiates.
2315---	798	Novitiates.
2316---	781	Novitiates.
2317---	778	Novitiates.
2318---	742	Novitiates.
2319---	708	Novitiates.
2320---	675	Novitiates.
2321---	596	Novitiates.
2322---	489	Novitiates.
2323---	312	Novitiates.

Valentine shook his head, hardly able to believe it. It was true—less and less had the Hags come out in public within the past years—but it was hard to believe that the reason was that they were dying out! And if it were true—at the present rate another five years would see them extinct!

He was distracted from this pleasurable thought by a sort of flopping noise coming from one of the cages. He walked over to peer into it—and stood fast, incredulous and sickened. A sodden lump of flesh lay on the floor, rhythmically arching its body, then relaxing with a flop. Over and over it repeated the slow, brainless motion, its face upturned blindly to the ceiling—if the eyeless, noseless mass of flesh below the hairline could properly be called a face. And the body to which it was attached . . .

He turned back, revolted and burning with fury. He gave the subjects in the other cages only a split-second glance—just long enough to see that they were beyond help from him. Was that, he wondered, why the Hag had

left him alone? So that he could look at them, and be frightened into obedience?

He could see no reason to doubt it—none but a deep conviction that the Hags were never obvious and a puzzled memory of the glint of malicious laughter he had seen in her eyes.

Valentine paused no longer. He walked quickly to the instrument cabinets and looked over the array of surgical tools inside. He chose a lean bistoury with a flat, razor-like blade and a handle that fitted his palm and walked to the locked door. His plan was far from concrete in his mind as he stood there, patient, waiting for what might enter.

Plan? He had no plan. Everything would depend, he thought dully, on the foresight of the Hag. If she came alone—then there was a slim, slim chance for life. If she came with one other and was just a little bit careless in her arrogance there would be a chance for revenge. But if she came cautiously and made no mistakes—then there was only a chance for death.

He remembered the uncanny medical skill of the Hags and realized that even death was not sure. A second's hesitation—a gash that cut not quite deep enough—and they could bring him back to life on their surgical tables. And that was a chance he could not afford to take.

His wait was not very long. He had just begun to tire of his position of rigid attention when there was a premonitory click and the door abruptly swung open. Valentine tensed for the spring, peering at the opening. Luck—there was only a single Hag! But as he was about to leap another figure appeared from behind her, holding a drawn ray-pencil. Stunned, Valentine recognized Darl! She was smiling, almost weeping in relief.

"Hurry, Valentine," she whispered. "Thank heaven I got here in time!"

VALENTINE wasted no time. He drew the pair inside the door, closed it. With the straps on the surgery tables he bound the Hag, and gagged her with a strip torn from her own white robes. He carried her to one of the cages, dropped her none too gently inside. Then he turned to face Darl.

"You're wonderful," he said simply. "Tell me how you got here—but not now. Now we have to get out. Do you know the way?"

Darl nodded. "The way we came—if there aren't any Hags around. I thought we could

take this one with us, and if anybody saw us they'd think we working for her or something."

Valentine shook his head. "Too many of them know what I look like. We'll have to try to stay out of sight, that's all. Lead the way."

Darl peered out into the hall, then motioned to him to follow. They hurried down the corridor, past the room where Valentine had been carried by the robot, to the elevators. Darl pressed the button and they waited for a silent second.

A clattering sound came down the corridor.

"A robot," Darl whispered, "Valentine!"

He stared about, saw a door ajar and tugged her toward it. They were inside just as he caught a glimpse of the thing rounding a corner toward them.

"Did it see us?" she whispered.

"I hope not." Valentine turned to inspect his surroundings. They were in a little anteroom. He saw another door and moved silently toward it, peered around the frame into the room beyond.

It was a long, narrow room with both long walls lined with telescreen after telescreen, all going at once. Before each screen was a photorecorder, and a Hag was moving along the line of screens, examining them. She was absorbed in what she was doing, Valentine thought, and the buzz of the sounds from the screen would cover any slight noise they might make.

He leaned out a little further, craning his neck to see what was on the screens. Oddly, they didn't seem used for communication. The nearest one showed only dim, flickering lights with no shape or substance. The second was a book, magnified in the foreground of the screen. It, too, flickered—part of the page becoming brighter and the rest dimmer from time to time.

The whole scene jerked around in the screen occasionally, as though the telecaster had been jarred by an incautious elbow. Valentine tried to make out the background of the scene but without success. It was curiously dim and blurred, worse than the usual out-of-focusness.

The Hag halted abruptly, staring at one of the screens in consternation. He tried to see what had made her excited. He caught only a glimpse of a woman's figure and a mechanical gadget in the screen. Then she had thrown a switch and the screen was blank.

The scene, he thought puzzledly, had a peculiar quality to it. It was something he had seen. . . .

Over the drone of tiny voices from the screens he heard the clatter in the hall, recalling him to his predicament. He moved to Darl's side, stood tensely while the pounding metallic feet came closer . . . and moved on past without interruption. They grew fainter, and finally faded out entirely.

"Good!" he framed with his lips for Darl. He opened the door cautiously and stepped outside. The elevator door was open and no one was in sight.

They dropped rapidly in the shaft. Valentine belatedly took the ray-pencil from Darl's hand. He held it half-concealed against his side as the elevator stopped and the door opened. There was still no one in sight. Incredible luck—thought Valentine and turned toward the daylight that shone through a door at the end of the corridor. They emerged into the court that was the main entrance to the Palace. And there luck deserted them.

There was a cargo-car parked in the court, and walking slowly around it was the massive shape of a robot. Valentine instinctively braced himself for the hopeless struggle—but there was none! Apparently the robot was only a guard for the goods-car. Surely its myriad eyes had seen them. But it merely continued its even mechanical march around the car.

Valentine asked no questions. Trying to seem as unconcerned as possible he led Darl out the entrance, down the street to where Hanley sat in the parked ground car, waiting for them.

CHAPTER VIII

"Bring in the Donovans"

THEY were blocks away before Valentine could sit back and relax.

"Give me a cigarette, Hanley," he said. "They picked my pockets in there."

He lit it and inhaled the pungent smoke with satisfaction. He stared at Darl through the fumes.

"I owe you my life," he said. "Thanks. Tell me how you did it."

"It wasn't very hard," Darl confessed. "I—I knew the place a little bit from the last time I was there. I just went back to the café and got the cashier's ray-pencil, and came in and got you. I ran into that Hag the first thing, so I brought her along."

Valentine shook his head wonderingly. "Marvelous girl," he said. "Well, let's get moving. There is work to be done."

"What do we do?" Hanley called over his shoulder, from the wheel.

"We go through with the original plan. Take us to the Marabek—you still going through with this, Darl?"

She nodded silently.

"Good. We'll get out there and you do a little scouting job. I want you to go down to that Earth storehouse and see if you can find out whether the Hags have taken it over. If possible get a couple of the disks—the Hags took mine away from me. But don't get in any trouble and meet us in the dining room of the Marabek in—well, let's say an hour."

Hanley nodded. "Okay," he said resignedly. "Don't think I'm going to enjoy it, though. It seems to me they'll find out you're gone some time soon."

"I thought of that," Valentine agreed. "That's a chance we have to take."

Hanley paused in front of the mammoth hotel just long enough for Valentine and the girl to get out, then was off toward the canal-front.

The covering clouds overhead were turning gray with sunset as they entered the hotel. With Darl on his arm Valentine strolled in a leisurely fashion toward the dining room, unobtrusively noticing every person in the lobby.

As they passed the desk he paused and said to Darl, "Excuse me for a second." Then, to the clerk, "Is Miss Elena Orris in her room?"

The man picked up a cradle phone and spoke into it. There was a brief wait, and then he spoke, shaking his head. "I'm sorry, sir. May I take a message?"

"Oh, I think not," Valentine said casually. "We'll be here for a while—I'll try later. By the way, what's her room number?"

"Twenty thirty-seven," said the clerk. Valentine thanked him politely and escorted Darl to the dining room. As the headwaiter came up he selected a table and pointed to it. The functionary gave him a sizing-up glance, then bowed and led them to the chosen spot.

It was near neither the orchestra nor the thinly-populated dance floor but it had one tremendous virtue—it was partly screened by a potted fern-tree, and there were no tables behind it, only a small alternate entrance to the dining room.

Darl and Valentine sat facing the dance floor. The waiter brought them thin glasses of greenish flower-dew, waited while Valentine ordered a meal. The restaurant surroundings reminded him that he hadn't eaten for hours—days, if one counted the time spent under the Hags' vita-rays at its true value.

When the waiter had gone Darl said, "No one can hear what we say now, can they?"

Valentine lifted his glass, smiling gently. "I suppose not. What do you want to talk about?"

She returned the smile but her voice had no laughter in it. She said, "Oh, Valentine, I'm worried!" The dancer's professional smile stayed on her face for the benefit of whoever might look but her voice was dangerously close to breaking.

Valentine said softly, "I won't lie to you. I'm worried too."

She stared at him for a bleak moment. Then the smile, which had wavered, came back. She lifted her glass to touch his. They drank ceremoniously . . . and then the waiter came back with the food.

When they had eaten and were sipping their thick, black swamplands coffee Valentine spoke seriously again.

"The vacation's over," he said abruptly. "Now we get back to work. I've got to see Elena Orris."

DARL nodded. "What are we going to do?"

He gestured to the waiter, asked for a phone. "Call her for me," he asked Darl. "She won't recognize your voice. Tell her you have to see her."

The waiter brought the phone and plugged it in. Darl picked it up hesitantly, looking to Valentine for help.

"Room twenty thirty-seven," he supplied. "Please. . . ."

Darl frowned but took the phone and spoke into it. She listened for a second, then said: "Hello. . . . Oh, she isn't? Thank you," and put it back in its cradle.

"She still isn't in," she told Valentine. "I'm not sorry. I don't know what I would have said to her."

Valentine ran a hand through his hair. He said, "But suppose I made a mistake. Suppose she doesn't come back to her room tonight."

Darl's annoyance faded. Her tawny eyes were large as she said, "Oh, Valentine, I'm sorry. Can't we wait here or something until she comes?"

"We might as well," Valentine said dourly. The waiter returned to remove the phone. Valentine watched him silently until he began to walk away, then snapped to life and called the man back.

"Two more flower-dews," he ordered. To Darl, "We might as well make a party of it. We'll drink this round to Elena Orris."

"Then you'd better order another," said a deep female voice from behind him. "I'll drink one to myself!"

Valentine stifled a grunt of surprise as Elena Orris walked around from behind him. She gestured to the waiter to bring another chair. There was cocksure confidence in her manner as she faced Valentine.

"They told me at the desk someone had called my room from here. I had a ghost of an idea it might be you so I came in the side door." She turned her eyes to Darl, studying her curiously. "Oh, I know you," she said. "You're the dancer, aren't you?"

Darl said evenly, "I dance at the Golden Nard. Do you earn your own living?"

"A point," conceded Elena Orris. "Well, let's talk about something else. Valentine, why have you been looking for me?"

Valentine shrugged. He said, "That's pretty obvious. You know where the Donovan city is, and I don't want you to tell the Hags."

Elena Orris smiled as the waiter came up with the fresh drinks. When he had gone

she said over the rim of her glass, "You're a little late. I've had eighteen hours in which to tell them if I wanted to."

He said dryly, "I was unavoidably detained. Do you mean you haven't tried to tell them?"

"I haven't. I wish you'd trust me, Valentine. I told you—Earth wants the Donovans for an ally."

Valentine said slowly, "Maybe you're lying again. But if you are it's too late for me to do anything about it."

"Correct," said the girl. "So you might as well assume I'm playing fair. Is there any reason why we can't be allies?"

Valentine said honestly, "I don't know if we can trust you. Earth has a bad record."

The girl said impatiently, "I told you what we want—mining concessions and trade. What do you have to lose?"

"Very little," Valentine admitted.

"That's right. It was different out in the swamps. You could keep me there, and your secret was safe. But I escaped."

"That raises an interesting point," Valentine said. "How did you get away?"

The girl smiled. "I took the anesthetic away from your surgeon."

"I know that. I mean, after you got in the barge."

"Oh. Well, I just started it and kept going until I came out in a canal. Then I stopped a canalcraft and asked them the way to Nard. He gave me directions. I went straight ahead for six miles, then left where the canals forked and left again—"

Valentine started at her. "You what? Which way did you turn, coming out of the Donovan city?"

"Why right, of course."

Valentine leaned back, still staring. He

[Turn page]

Backache, Leg Pains May Be Danger Sign Of Tired Kidneys

If backache and leg pains are making you miserable, don't just complain and do nothing about them. Nature may be warning you that your kidneys need attention.

The kidneys are Nature's chief way of taking excess acids and poisonous waste out of the blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

If the 15 miles of kidney tubes and filters don't work well, poisonous waste matter stays in the blood. These poisons may start nagging backaches, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of

pep and energy, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Don't wait! Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, a stimulant diuretic, used successfully by millions for over 50 years. Doan's give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from the blood. Get Doan's Pills. (Ado.)

shook his head ruefully after a moment. He said almost to himself, "I guess it was an easy mistake to make—but we were idiots, all the same. We forgot there were two directions on the waterway. We headed for Nard and you were going there by the long way around! No wonder we couldn't catch you!"

"Was that the wrong way? I'd never seen it before, you see."

Valentine said resignedly. "Never mind. Go ahead with your story. You were persuading me we ought to be allies."

The girl shrugged irritably. "That's all. If I haven't talked you into it by now I give up. Help us and we'll help you. Refuse—and you know very well the Hags will wipe you out."

Valentine said, conversationally, "Of course, I could kill you and keep you from telling the Hags that way. I might even be able to get out of Nard alive, that way."

THE girl shook her head. "It wouldn't do you any good. I'm not the only one who knows."

Valentine scanned her narrowly. "I suppose that means you told the ensign about it. Well, it would be a little harder but I could kill him too."

She wavered, but clung gamely to the argument. "I doubt if you could find him—I told him to stay hidden. Even if you did, you wouldn't be sure. And you can't afford to take that big a chance."

Valentine admitted defeat. "All right," he said abruptly. "Let's talk business. We're allies—I can speak for the Council of the Donovans."

The girl exhaled deeply and raised her glass again. "A toast to our alliance!" she proposed and drank. Then, "I'll tell you the whole story," she said. She took one of the wavetraps out of her handbag and tossed it on the table.

"You know what these things are. You operate them—so." She touched a tiny stud projecting from the rim of the disk. Valentine thought he heard a faint, faint hum before she pushed the stud back into place and the sound died. "They take any radio wave within range, suck it in and rebroadcast it as static. It's not just a radio receiver—it attracts radio waves. It will even break in on a sealed beam such as the Hags use for their robots. And the effective radius of action is about fifty feet."

"Suppose they change frequencies?" Valentine asked.

"It doesn't matter. This isn't selective—any wave length will work it."

"And what happens to the robot?"

"It depends on what it's doing when it comes within range. If it's just standing still, nothing happens. It keeps on standing there and you can walk up to it and defuse it. If it's moving it will probably keep on moving until it runs into something or falls down. But it can't be controlled any more by the Hags."

Valentine nodded, reached out and touched the thing. The hum began. He listened to it curiously, then said, "When does the attack come off? Are the rest of the Earthmen ready?"

"They're ready. The attack is planned for tomorrow!"

"Tomorrow! And what do you want us to do?"

"Bring in the Donovans! Let them help us do the fighting. We'll give them wavetraps, fight side by side with them against the Hags."

Valentine, face suddenly tense, said, "I forgot to ask you. Do you know that the Hags found out about the wavetraps? Apparently they found them in the warehouse last night."

"I know," Elena said. "Ensign Drake told me all about it. The robots were buzzing around there like flies. They took a crate of the traps to the Hag Palace and left a robot guarding the door so we can't get at what's left. He was watching from across the street."

"Fine," Valentine said disgustedly. "What does that do to our plans?"

"Why, nothing at all. We only had about a thousand traps in the warehouse. We have six times as many hidden away."

"Where?"

She hesitated. "They're—in a safe place," she said finally. "Maybe it's better if I don't tell you where. That's how secrets leak out."

Valentine nodded slowly. "All right. Just so you get them to us when we need them." He sat up straighter, reached out for the disk and held it for a second before clicking it off.

"It sounds all right," he said. "You agree not to make any demands for Earth beyond the mining rights?"

"That's all. We have to have them, Valentine. Venus is the last rich source of carno-

tite, and Earth needs uranium."

Valentine said abruptly, "We'll do it." He paused, thinking rapidly. "I can get back to the Donovan city in two hours. Say it takes me four hours to get a thousand men together, then another two hours to bring them back. We'll pick up the gadgets on the way and be here and ready by daybreak."

The girl stood up, her face flushed, the sparkle of high adventure in her eyes. She said, "I'll find Ensign Drake and tell him to get everything ready. We'll meet you at the waterfront at the south end of the city—an hour before sunrise!"

She picked up the disk, turned and hurried out without another word. Valentine followed her with troubled eyes.

Darl asked, "Can we trust her, Valentine? These Earthpeople. . ."

"I wish I knew," he said wearily. "Heaven knows she's right in what she says. He have nothing to lose—but I just can't trust Earth."

He glanced at his wrist watch. "Hanley's overdue," he said. "We'll give him ten more minutes, then I'll have to start out for the city. It's going to be difficult enough without wasting any more time. . ."

But it was less than ten minutes when Hanley appeared—only a matter of seconds after the Earthgirl had left.

There was anxiety in his chunky face as he stared around the dining room for them. When he spied them he hurried over.

Valentine rose instinctively to meet him. "What's the matter?" he asked crisply.

Hanley groaned, "Elena Orris—that's the matter. I saw her coming out just as I was coming in. She was a prisoner, with a robot holding onto her. They took her toward the Hag Palace!"

CHAPTER IX

Time to Move

VALENTINE stood fast, but it seemed the room spun around him. Success had opened up to him where he had expected only failure—and then it had been snatched away.

He sank down into his chair. All he said was, "Lord!"

Quickly, sympathetically, Darl touched his hand. "I know, Valentine," she whispered.

"It looked good for a second."

"I can't understand it," he said dazedly. "If they knew she was connected with this revolt—or knew that she had information on the Donovan city—why didn't they pick her up before? Why didn't they get her this morning, when they jumped me? It's almost as though they knew everything that was going on and were giving us enough rope to hang ourselves."

Darl shook her head despondently.

Hanley said, "Listen, maybe they have this place wired up, Valentine! Maybe they've been listening in on what's been said here!"

Valentine snapped to attention, his eyes darting about. Then he slumped back. "No," he said. "They couldn't wire every table in the city—and they didn't know we'd sit at this one." He held up his hand. "Please," he begged. "Let me think this over for a second. Part of this just doesn't make sense."

The two watched him with bated breath. He sat motionless, staring into space, revolving ideas in his mind. Somehow the pieces could be fitted together, he thought. Somewhere there was a solution that could save them. The wavetraps, and the robots and the Earth plan for revolt. . .

The Hags knew more than he had imagined, he realized. That morning the robots had come boiling out of the Palace as though they knew what they were after. There had been no looking around for him, no indecision. And his escape was peculiar.

It was peculiar that Darl had made a single-handed entry into the supposedly impregnable palace, and succeeded.

"Let's get out of here," he said suddenly. "I want to see something." They paid their check and left. It was dark night outside with only the fluorescents of the city casting a glow upon the clouds overhead. They got in Darl's parked ground car, Hanley at the wheel.

"Drive down to the canal where we left the barge," Valentine ordered. "If it's still there maybe we can get through to the Donovans. But I'm not very hopeful."

And his despair was justified. Hanley wheeled the vehicle down to the waterfront and there before them was the spot where they had left the canalcraft. It was still there—but standing impassive guard before it was a serf-robot, silent and waiting. And out in the stream they could see the lights of patrolling canalcraft, could make out the jagged outlines of the mechanical monsters

who were their crews.

Hanley drove past the moored canalcraft at an even pace, to avoid attracting attention, then turned another corner and slowed.

"It looks bad," he said over his shoulder. "It looks like they're waiting for us."

Soberly Valentine nodded. "I was afraid of it," he said. "Now I think we're beaten."

His mind was surprisingly calm. He accepted the fact of defeat. It was there and nothing could be done about it. The girl and the wavetraps could have saved them but the Hags had her captive. And the disks were guarded—he had glimpsed the robot as they drove past.

The Hags had Elena Orris. She was not the type to talk easily—but they would not be as humane as he and she would talk in the end. When the Hags had the location of the Donovan city from her the robots would come. . . .

He mused idly upon the curious callousness of the robots, steel and plastic simulacra of humanity. If it had been human warriors fighting for the Hags there might have been a chance. But against the machines—never. And the tiny new ones the Hags seemed to be building now, the receptors they had found in the crashed plane—What were they like? They were so small, small enough to be lost in a garment, or a fold of flesh.

He sat bolt upright and Darl stared at him. "What's the matter, Valentine?" she asked querulously.

He stared at her in abstraction. "Nothing," he said finally. "I just . . . nothing."

In his mind was a vision and he clung to it, fascinated.

It was a line of telescreens like those he had seen in the Hag Palace, and before the screens a Hag was watching. The brief glimpse he had caught of the scenes portrayed—the mystifying scenes that seemed to be the wheel of a ground car and the pages of a book and the blurred vision of a scene oddly like the one he himself was looking at. . . .

"Give me a pencil and paper," he said.

Darl, staring at him curiously, fumbled in her bag and brought out a notebook. "I'll light the dome light," she said, reaching for the switch. But Valentine stopped her.

"Never mind the light," he said.

Darl watched him with deep apprehension. His eyes were fixed on the back of Hanley's head before them and the notebook was in his lap. His hand was painfully printing

on the page of the book in the slow, agonized manner of a blind man. She peered to see what he was writing but his big hand covered the page.

AFTER a few moments he ripped the page out, still without looking at it, and folded it once. He handed back the notebook and pencil.

"What was I saying?" he asked.

She sat upright in the seat, half facing him. "Tell me what you're thinking!" she demanded.

Valentine took her hand gently. "I'm sorry, Darl," he said. "I was upset for a while. Now it's all right."

"All right!" she gasped. "With the Hags ready to wipe out the Donovans, searching the city for you—"

"Darl, if you had heard just twenty-four hours ago that the Hags had wiped out the Donovans, what would it have meant to you?"

"Why—nothing, I guess," she confessed. "But that was yesterday!"

"And today it's the same," Valentine said persuasively. "What would you say if I told you that we can live in peace, you and I together?"

Her eyes opened wider than ever and her jaw unbeautifully dropped. She faced him without words, searching his face in the darkness. She could see lines of strain lurking behind the impassiveness.

"We can do it, Darl," he said. "The Hags made me an offer today. My life in exchange for information. Since they'll have the information soon anyhow I might as well give in. You see, we're beaten, Darl. We haven't got much left and we can't afford to lose what we've got."

There was a shriek of brakes and an abrupt swerve. Hanley brought the ground car to a stop, turned and faced them.

"What the heck, Valentine!" he exploded. "I heard that!"

Valentine released Darl and leaned forward, his face drawn with obscure emotions. He placed a hand on Hanley's shoulder and said tersely, "What else can we do? Think it over—don't say anything yet."

Hanley's furious expression turned to perplexity and he gazed down into his lap. Valentine hastily sat back.

"While you're thinking, Hanley," he said, "you might as well drive us around. I don't know how much more freedom we're going

to have and I want to make the most of mine."

Valentine placed an arm around Darl's shoulders, drew her to him. She struggled free, almost weeping. "I don't understand," she said.

Valentine sighed and narrowed his eyes. "Darl, Hanley said something to me the other night. He said you were in love with me. Tell me whether he was right or wrong."

Color leaped into her marble cheeks. She said, "He was right, Valentine."

He swallowed convulsively. "Then trust me," he ordered. "Lean back—here." He drew her to him. "Close your eyes, Darl. I want to tell you something." Gently his fingers crept around her small head, touched the lids of her eyes to make sure they were closed.

Valentine shut his own eyes and spoke to her softly. "I could never tell you that I loved you before, Darl," he whispered. "Not while I was a Donovan and an outlaw. I couldn't ask a woman to share the risk. But now. . . ."

He spoke on and on, and gradually the tenseness in the girl's slim figure subsided and she clung to him. "Don't open your eyes," he whispered, and took his hand away. It was only then that he found his hand was damp . . . with her silent tears.

In the front seat Hanley frowned and read over again the note that Valentine had surreptitiously dropped in his lap. He shrugged hopelessly, then with determination crumpled it, flung it out the window and started the car again. After a moment the frown disappeared and his face began almost to wear a smile.

At least, he was thinking, there would be a fight!

THE car slowed down and Hanley's voice came back to them.

"Valentine," he said tentatively, "Valentine, we're there now. Are you sure about this?"

Valentine said exultantly, "Is the robot still guarding the entrance?"

"Yep."

"Just one—no others close enough to do us any damage right away?"

"Well—the one across the street. But we'll have half a minute, or so, before it can get here."

"Fine!" Valentine released the girl. He yelled, "Go ahead, Hanley! Plow into him!"

The car surged forward as Hanley trod on the accelerator, swerved around in a tight arc and smashed into something with a vast cacophony.

Darl's eyes flew open as she was catapulted forward in her seat. Valentine caught her as the car ground to a stop and she stared around. "Why, we're back at the warehouse! she gasped. "What's happening?"

But Valentine was no longer beside her to hear. He was up and out of the car, followed closely by Hanley. She heard his exultant yell, "Got him! Good man, Hanley—come on!" and saw the two of them run into the warehouse.

Then she saw what he was gloating over—what Hanley had done. A serf-robot, feebly waving its tentacles, was pinned between the collision-bumper of the car and the corner of the building. It was not destroyed but it could not do them any damage and Darl began to understand what Hanley had done. They couldn't challenge the serf-robot on foot but the momentum of the heavy, hurtling ground-car had done what their feeble human strength could not.

Still—there were the other robots. Darl, stricken by the thought, whirled to look at the robot which had been guarding the canal-craft at the wharf down the street. And just in time—it was racing toward her, tentacles flailing the air.

Darl didn't stop to think. She ran into the building, following Valentine and Hanley. Inside was darkness except for a yellow point of light off to one side, where Hanley was holding a match flame while Valentine scrambled around in a broken crate that had been dashed against the floor.

She ran toward him, screaming, "Run! There's a robot right behind me—oh, run, Valentine!"

But Valentine was already running—toward her. He was fumbling with one of the silvery disks as he ran. He dodged past her without a word, his expression invisible in the dark. Astonished, Darl turned to stare after him.

There was a thundering on the floor and the huge bulk of the robot hurtled through the door, whirled and sped toward them, the bright search-beam flaring from its domed body. Silhouetted between the robot and herself Darl saw Valentine halt and stand tensely waiting, caught a glitter of light from the silvery disk in his hand. The robot pounded toward him.

Then, when only a dozen yards away, it happened.

As though stricken by an invisible sledge, the robot stumbled and fell, slid along the rough wood of the warehouse floor for twice the length of a man . . . and lay motionless, its brilliant search-beam pointed straight at the ceiling.

Valentine's exultant laugh rang out. "It works!" he yelled. "The wavetraps—they really work! Hanley, Darl—fill your pockets with them. And then come on. We've got to get out of here!"

CHAPTER X

Into the Hags' Palace

MIRACULOUSLY, the car still worked, though it bucked and bumped from an axle that had been jarred askew. But it carried them rapidly along if not in comfort.

"We're going to the Hag Palace," Valentine ordered. "And hurry. We've got a lot to do before we're out of danger."

Hanley nodded and concentrated on his driving. But Darl said dazedly, "I don't understand. Ten minutes ago you said we were hopelessly beaten. What happened?"

Gently Valentine rested a hand on her shoulder. "That was misdirection," he said. "The Hags were listening. I had to throw them off the track to give us a little time."

"Listening? How?"

"That's what puzzled me," Valentine admitted. "I couldn't understand it, at first. Then, when I thought I had it, it was fantastic, hard to believe. But it checked."

Hanley took a corner on two wheels. Over his shoulder he complained, "I don't know what you're talking about. What was hard to believe."

"Do you remember what I told you about the Hag ship that crashed? We found something on it—tiny little robot transmitters. At least, we thought they were for robots. But they weren't. Do you remember the tele-screens we saw in the Hag Palace? Each one of those was showing a scene being picked up by one of the tiny transmitters. They were spy transmitters!"

Darl gasped. "Do you mean the Hags were listening in on everything we said with one of those things hidden in the car?"

Valentine shook his head. "Not exactly. They were just transmitters, nothing else. They didn't have photocells or microphones. All they could do was rebroadcast radio waves."

"Well then! What in the world—"

Valentine reached out and touched her hand. "That's what was so hard to believe," he said. "But the brain is a kind of a radio transmitter itself. Yours, mine, everybody's. The nerves conduct a measurable amount of electrical energy. It can be detected by a sensitive radio set. Do you begin to see now?"

She shook her head silently.

Valentine shrugged. "They rebroadcast brain waves! Everything you or I saw and heard the transmitters picked up and relayed to the Hags. Darl—remember that you told me what the Hags did to you when they took you to the Palace, and then let you go without explanation?"

"You said they had given you a vita-ray treatment, after anesthetizing you. That means only one thing—an operation. I had the same experience. Do you know what the operation was? What they did to you while you were unconscious?"

Woefully—"No."

"They buried one of those transmitters in your flesh! I think it must be in the back of the neck, near the spine. That's where mine seems to be, and it's a logical place—near the brain, you see. The thing was so small you'd never notice it. Even an X-ray might not show it. And under the vita-rays even the scar was healed before they released you. But from that moment on the Hags could see everything you were looking at with your own eyes, hear every sound that came to your ears!"

"Good heavens!" Hanley cried. "No wonder the Hags knew everything."

Darl whispered, "How awful!" Then her hand flew to the nape of her neck. "Can they still see everything?" she asked.

"No! The wavetraps protect us. They interfere with the radio communication of the spy transmitters, just as with the robots. As long as we carry the traps we're all right—and if we live through the next hour we can have one of the Donovan surgeons remove them later."

"Sounds logical," Hanley admitted from the driver's seat. "Tell me one more thing before we get to the Hag Palace—how did you know all this?"

"It was the only answer. The Hags knew things that they couldn't have known any other way. They knew where Elena Orris was and where I was. And then they let me escape—deliberately, as if they knew you were coming. They left me alone at just the proper time.

"Coincidence doesn't stretch that far, and the Hags don't make such obvious mistakes. There had to be an explanation. And there was. They *wanted* me to escape. My guess is that they expected me to make a run for the Donovan city. That would have been fatal—a thousand robots would have followed me and destroyed us all!"

"I get it," said Hanley. "Okay, Valentine—we're almost there. Now what?"

"Stop the car across the street from the Palace," Valentine ordered.

HE LEAPED out as soon as the car had stopped, glanced around quickly. It was still dark though the dawn was not far away. Across the street loomed the Hag Palace. A robot was visible at the entrance a hundred yards away. Satisfied that there was no immediate danger, Valentine turned back to the car.

"We're in a bad spot," he told the others. "I don't know just how we're going to do it but we have to get Elena Orris out of there."

"How?" asked Hanley.

"I don't know," Valentine confessed.

Uneasily Hanley said, "Look, Valentine, why can't we just leave her there? I know these wavetraps are great stuff but suppose something goes wrong? What would happen to the rest of the Donovans?"

Valentine shook his head. "You're right—but she's in trouble. We've got to get her out."

Hanley succumbed. "All right—but she wouldn't do it for you." He glared bitterly at the disk in his hand.

"I don't see why they couldn't have made these things a little bigger," he complained. "The way it is now, they're only good as a last resort. If they—*hey!* What's the matter?" He jumped back involuntarily as Valentine spun on him, staring.

"Say that again!" Valentine demanded.

"All I said was, these things should've been bigger. Don't scare me like that!"

Valentine shook his head wonderingly. "Hanley, you're a genius. Why didn't you think of that a little sooner?"

"Think of what?"

"Think of juicing the wavetraps up! It's very simple—with the power that they get from the built-in powerpacks, they're effective at fifty feet. Twice as much power and they'll be effective twice as far. A hundred times as much power and they'll blanket the city! All we have to do is give them more power and we're in!"

"But where do we get the power?" Darl asked.

Valentine's lean face split in a grin. "From the powerpacks that run this car! Get out, Hanley. Let me get at the packs."

Hanley got out, and the two of them ripped furiously at the floorboards. In a second they had exposed the dull black brick that powered the ground car. Valentine was reaching for the leads when he heard Darl's gasp.

"Valentine!" she whispered urgently. "Better hurry up—there's a robot patrol coming this way!"

Valentine swore and straightened, staring down the street. A few hundred yards away came trotting three serf-robots. As he looked the leading robot, sweeping its search-beam from side to side, caught them in its glare.

"They saw us!" Valentine said. They had—there was but a second's pause and then the robots swerved in their course and came hurtling toward the parked ground-car and the three fugitives.

"What'll we do?" Hanley asked nervously. Valentine held up his hand. The three stood frozen, tensely waiting, while the robots hurtled toward them. Then they crossed the invisible line of the wavetraps' influence. They staggered—and the first one fell, the others tumbling over it and lying there like wrecked fragments of machinery.

Hanley exhaled a long sigh of relief. "Maybe I'll get used to this in time," he said prayerfully, "but that time's a long way off."

"We aren't safe yet," Valentine interrupted. "There'll be more, now that the Hags have seen us. And they may get smart enough to stay out of range and use a ray-pencil on us! Here—loosen the leads to the powerpack, while I open this disk."

He took another wavetraps out of his pocket, turned it in his hand. There was a tiny slit next to the lever that turned it on and off. As he had seen the radio-tech do back in the Donovan city, he inserted his thumbnail in the slit and twisted. The top of the disk came off in his hand, and he was staring

down into an intricate mass of wires and condensers.

Hanley had one of the power leads loose in his hand. The other was still attached to the power-pack, lying on the seat of the car. "Suppose it's too much power and the thing burns out?" he asked.

"It shouldn't. There aren't any tubes or filaments in it—nothing that might burn. And if it does that's the chance we take." Valentine frowned and lifted out a tiny cylinder, half the size of a cigarette.

"Thank heaven I watched our radio-tech take these things apart," he said. He ripped loose the wires to the dwarf powerpack, attached them gently to the leads, wrapping them securely around the contact points. He set the whole affair down on the seat of the car.

"All right, Hanley," he said. "Plug the other end of the lead in and keep your fingers crossed!"

Then he heard the familiar drumming on the pavement again. He looked up in consternation and, from the gateway of the Hag Palace down the street, saw what seemed an unending line of robots racing straight for them!

"Plug it in, Hanley!" he ordered. Hanley tore his eyes off the robots and thrust the loose end of the lead in his hand against the terminal of the power-pack. There was no faint drone this time. Instead there was a shrill buzzing as of a million tiny hornets. It was hard to realize that so much noise could come from so tiny a thing as the wavetrap—but it was working!

"Look!" gasped Darl. Like Juggernauts gone mad, the robots were hurling themselves to destruction. There must have been forty of them in the street all racing down on them in one second, and in the second that followed—destroyed.

Without the distant control of a Hag to keep them on course, most of the self-robots merely toppled over and slid, piling up as had the three others.

Some, even after they had fallen, continued to thrash the air with their waving tentacles and limbs—still moving but no longer under control and no longer dangerous. One went careening off in a broad arc, smashing finally against the wall of a building less than a hundred feet from them.

"So far, so good," Valentine said grimly. "Now we try the hard part—fighting the Hags in their own Palace!"

CHAPTER XI

The Trick That Took

CLUTCHING Darl's ray-pencil, Valentine ran toward the Palace with the other two following. They skirted the prostrate forms of the robots and were inside the Palace itself before they met trouble. There was a flat hiss of sound and Valentine involuntarily flung himself to the ground.

He caught a flicker of motion in one of the corridor-entrances and fired at it. A Hag with a ray-pencil yelled and disappeared, her running footsteps echoing out to them. When he got to the entrance she was out of sight.

The three trotted down the corridor to the elevators, where Darl and Valentine had come out less than a dozen hours before. A car was waiting. But when Valentine thumbed the controls nothing happened. The controls were dead.

"They've cut the power," he said. "Well—there's no help for it. We'll have to find the stairs and climb!"

What had been an effortless trip of a few seconds in the high speed elevators of the Hags turned out to be a man-killing climb on foot even after they had found the stairs.

"You were on the fourteenth floor," Darl panted. "Maybe—Elena—will be in—the same place."

Valentine merely nodded, conserving breath. They had one more floor to go—then they heard the sound of alarm bells, a clanging that rolled toward them from all directions as every bell in the Hag Palace went off at once. A shrill female voice shrieked words that distance muffled and made impossible to understand over the annunciators.

"They're alerting the whole Palace," Valentine gasped. "Here's where the going gets tough!"

They burst out of the stair well into the familiar gray corridor, Valentine in the lead with the ray pencil ready. The corridor was empty. Darl pointed breathlessly down the hall.

"I think it was that fourth door," she said. Valentine nodded and raced to it—but when he flung open the door, the room was empty. He dashed to the pens that lined the wall—all were empty, even of the flopping mon-

strosities the Hags had created with their surgery.

Darl was about to speak but the rattle of the alarm bells drowned her out—near by this time, and so loud that they almost deafened them. There was a squeal of sound, then the shrill, peremptory female voice again.

"Warning," it shrilled. "Warning to all Novitiates. Ascend to Ship Level Immediately! The Earthies are approaching the Palace. Blast-off time in ten minutes!"

"Ship level?" Hanley repeated. "What's that?"

Valentine shrugged. "I don't know. But something's up—looks as if the Earthies have declared themselves in on the fight." He frowned. "Let's get out of here," he said. "We've got to find Elena Orris."

"Perhaps I can help you," said a harsh female voice from the corridor. "She's right down the hall."

Valentine whirled, the ray pencil jutting out at the Hag who stood watching them. She raised her scraggly eyebrows in mock surprise.

"I have no weapon," she said. "See? All I want to do is to take you to Elena Orris." Hanley growled, "It's a trick! Careful, Valentine!"

The Hag frowned reprovingly at him. Valentine said, "Of course it's a trick. Still—let's see what happens. We'll never find Elena by ourselves."

"That's right," said the Hag. She pointed to the door of a room across the hall. "She's right in there. The door's not locked."

Valentine, face tense, said, "You go in first. Remember, I have no compunctions about killing women. Not when they're as vicious and corrupt as you!"

The Hag snarled silently but walked ahead of them. She flung the door wide and walked steadily in. Through the door, lying supine on a couch against the wall, was Elena Orris, apparently asleep.

"Anesthetized," the Hag flung over her shoulder. "She'll come out of it in an hour or so."

Valentine started toward her, his guard momentarily down. He was well within the door before his ear caught the faint clatter of moving metal—and by the time he whirled it was too late! Hidden by the open door stood a serf-robot, unaccountably still in operation.

Before Valentine could overcome his shock

the lashing tentacles had whipped about him and caught him dizzily into the air. He heard a yell from Hanley and a gasp of pain from Darl as they, too, were caught. A twisting tentacle snatched the ray-pencil from his hand . . . and they were neatly trussed and helpless.

The Hag shrieked with gloating laughter. "The very clever Donovans," she crooned. "As helpless as babes."

She strode closer, staring at Valentine. "Can you twist your head a little bit?" she asked solicitously. "Just far enough to look down at the floor. What do you see?"

VALENTINE looked, puzzled. There was a long, black cable snaking off to a monitor box in the wall. He wondered—then it became clear.

"I see you understand," the Hag said harshly. "Your wavetraps worked beautifully—as long as the robots were directed by radio. But you never expected us to connect one to its monitor by cable, did you?" She laughed stridently, then stepped back and glanced at the timepiece on her wrist.

"I must hurry," she said apologetically. "The Earthies are coming—and I must be gone before they arrive." Her face darkened savagely. "You—animals," she spat. "You and the Earthies, daring to pit yourself against us! But don't think you've won! All this means is a temporary inconvenience. We'll be back. Ganymede is not so far off that we won't be able to come back. And when we return we'll stay!"

"Ganymede!" gasped Darl, startled into speech. "But how—how will you get there?"

"Ha!" the Hag grunted explosively. "Then you didn't know everything, did you? We've planned this for a long time—a colony on Ganymede. We've prepared everything—bred specialized slaves in our laboratories, even built a ship. Oh, you never knew what went on in the Hag Palace!

"The ship alone was an immense project. But you never knew. Listen to me—I'll tell you about it. It's in this very building! The six topmost stories are false—and inside them, all ready for the trip, is a rocket capable of taking us anywhere in the System!"

She stepped back, mock sympathy on her face. She turned to the wall, swung out a panel and carefully turned a knob concealed behind it.

"That gives you eight more minutes of life," she announced. "In five minutes the

ship takes off—and, three minutes after that, the timer will set off enough U-Two thirty-five to blast this building to powder!”

She waved a sardonic farewell and walked past them, out into the corridor without a backward glance. In a moment they heard the closing of an elevator door—then silence.

“Try to get loose!” Valentine ordered as soon as the Hag was out of earshot. “Squirm—twist around—it’s our only chance.” He was straining every muscle himself but it was useless. Against the steel tentacles of the robot his strength was impotent.

“Can’t do a thing,” Hanley panted. “Listen, if all the Hags are leaving for the ship what makes this thing keep on holding us?”

“That’s what it’s set to do—it’ll keep on holding us until the controls at the other end of the cable are set for something else. Or until we all blow up.” Valentine abruptly stopped squirming.

It did no good. The only thing that could help him then was thought. Brow furrowed, he stared at the floor, his mind racing. He gazed absently at the snakelike black cable. . . .

“That’s it!” he whooped. “Hanley—can you reach that cable with your feet? You’re nearest.”

Hanley strained. “Yeah,” he reported. “What do I do?”

“Try to pull it out of its socket! They can’t have had time to do a good job. Kick it loose!”

Hanley, stretching his leg to the limit, managed to slip a toe under the curling length of the cable. He kicked—but the cable slipped away before he could accomplish his purpose. He swore, tried again. This time it happened! There was a sharp electrical hiss and a puff of acrid blue smoke. The robot’s tentacles tightened on them convulsively, bruising their already tortured bodies. Then they slacked and fell away.

“I got a shock,” Hanley complained, rubbing his foot.

“Never mind that!” Valentine darted over to the panel in the wall, stared desperately at the knob the Hag had turned. That was all there was, just the knob with a pointer on a dial graduated in minutes, nothing else. After a quick inspection Valentine grasped the knob and tried to turn it. It would not turn, no matter how much he forced it.

“No use,” he said dismally. “It only turns one way, apparently—and I’m afraid to try to shut it off altogether. We’ll have to make

a run for it.” He turned to the sleeping Elena Orris, slapped her ruthlessly. She didn’t respond. “We’ll have to carry her.”

“I’ll take her,” Hanley offered. “Come on, let’s get out of here.” He picked up the girl and hurried out of the door, down toward the stairs. Darl started to follow, then turned to look at Valentine.

“Go ahead,” he ordered, his face wrinkled with thought. “I’ll be with you in a second.”

THEY made it down the long flights of stairs in record time. On the lowest level of the Palace they encountered the vanguard of the Earthies, milling around in indecision under the inadequate leadership of Ensign Drake. But they responded to Valentine’s shouted warnings and every human was out of danger when it happened.

Hanley was just gasping, “It’s about time for that ship of theirs to be blasting off,” when there was a mighty thunder of sound and the entire Hag Palace seemed to bulge and crumble. The concussion sent them flying into each other, sheltered though they were from the direct blast.

Debris rained for blocks around but they had been warned, and were hugging the walls of the buildings. There were a few casualties among the Earthies—men hurt by flying stone—but no one was killed. And the Hags were destroyed.

“What happened?” Hanley asked in awe. “Why didn’t their ship get away?”

“It didn’t have a chance,” Valentine said soberly. “The timer for the U-Two thirty-five only worked in one direction. I couldn’t stop it or set it back to give us more time. But I could set it ahead. I set it three and a half minutes faster—and it went off right on schedule, thirty seconds before their blast-off time.”

Hanley nodded, looking around. An Earth surgeon was bending over Elena Orris with the Space-Fleet ensign hovering anxiously in the background. As he watched she stirred and looked up, jerking her head away from the stimulant capsule the surgeon had crushed under her nose.

Hanley looked at Valentine and Darl, standing behind him in the sheltering doorway of a residence building. Valentine’s arm was around the girl, and Hanley regarded them with pleasure. Then, surprised, he saw her face suddenly cloud.

She jerked away.

"Valentine!" she said. "Valentine, you— you heel!"

Startled, Valentine looked down at her. Darl's eyes were flashing in abrupt anger.

"I'm a little bit slow in understanding things," she said tautly. "Forgive me. I've been so rushed, I haven't had time to think."

"What are you talking about?" Valentine asked bewilderedly.

"You know what I'm talking about! Your deception!"

"What deception?"

"What you said to me in the car! Telling me that you loved me—kissing me—just so you could get me to close my eyes, so that the Hags wouldn't be able to see where we were going. It was all a trick—and I fell for it!"

Valentine looked at her for a searching moment. Then, without turning his head,

he said, "Hanley, go visit somebody else for a while. As a personal favor."

Grinning, Hanley turned on his heel and strolled toward the Earthies. But as he walked away he heard Valentine saying softly, "Darl—that was part of it. I admit it. I couldn't just ask you to close your eyes—it would have made the Hags suspicious. The easiest way to do it was to make love to you. Don't you understand? It was the only way I could do it."

"Yes . . . yes, I suppose so," Darl said; almost sobbing. "It's just that I made such a fool of myself, with all those horrid old harpies watching. And that was all it meant to you—just a trick."

Valentine shook his head. "No, that wasn't all," he said gently. He stepped closer to her, holding out his arms. He whispered, "Darl, there's nobody watching now."



"If You Go Up to Peak Seven Hundred—You Will Have to Leave Your Soul Behind You . . ."

VAN HORNUNG agreed to show Miller the way to the peak, but warned him! "The attempt to achieve the summits may kill you—but if you live, you will not care about anything any more."

"I'll take a chance," said Miller. "Lead the way."

And so began the strangest of journeys, a journey in the dim twilight of the arctic moon. Miller took two or three steps along the purple slope and then suddenly he found himself moving upward without effort. The mountain was sliding away below him.

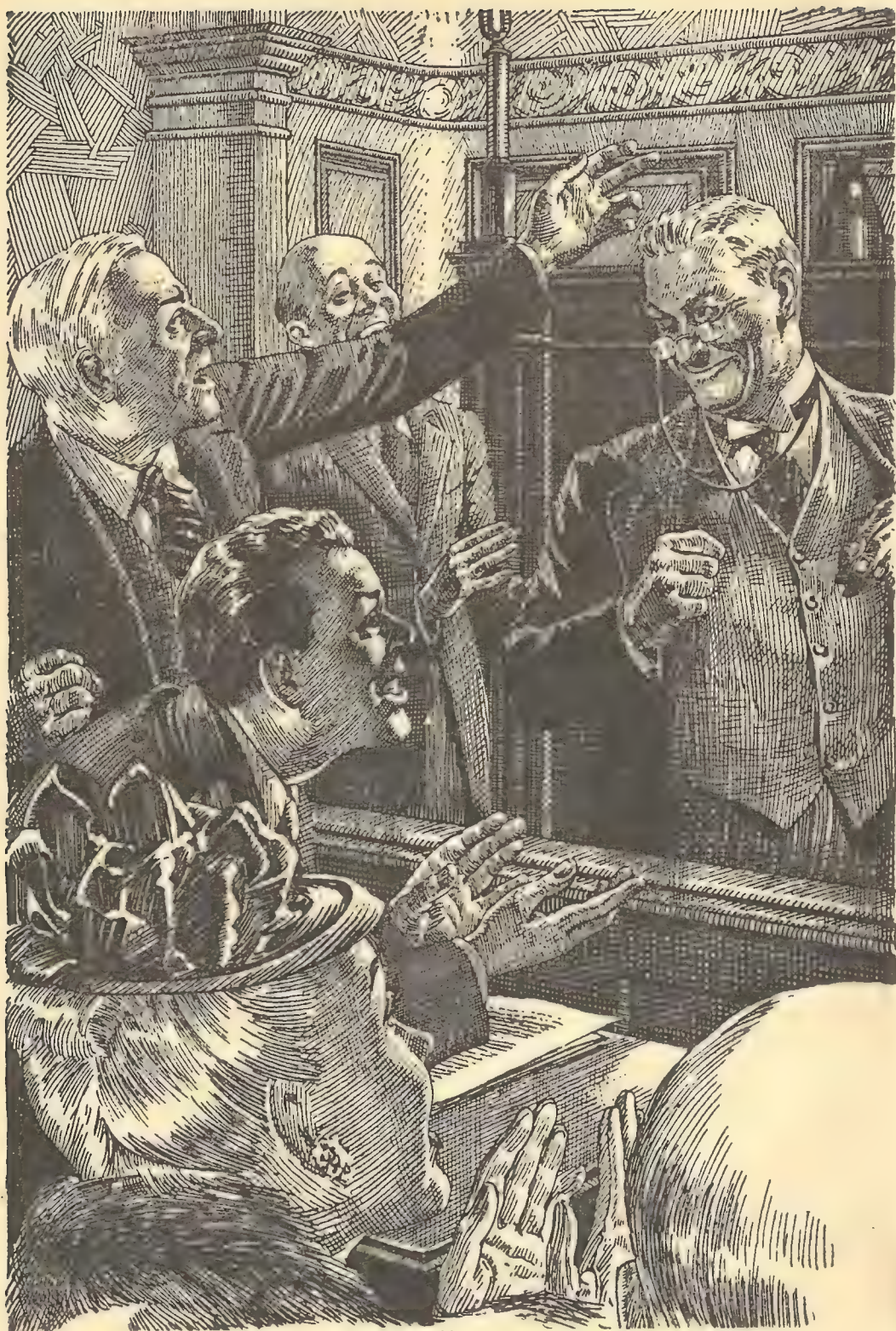
"The road's moving," Miller told himself. "I'm fixed to it somehow. My feet are like stone—like the substance of the road. . . ."

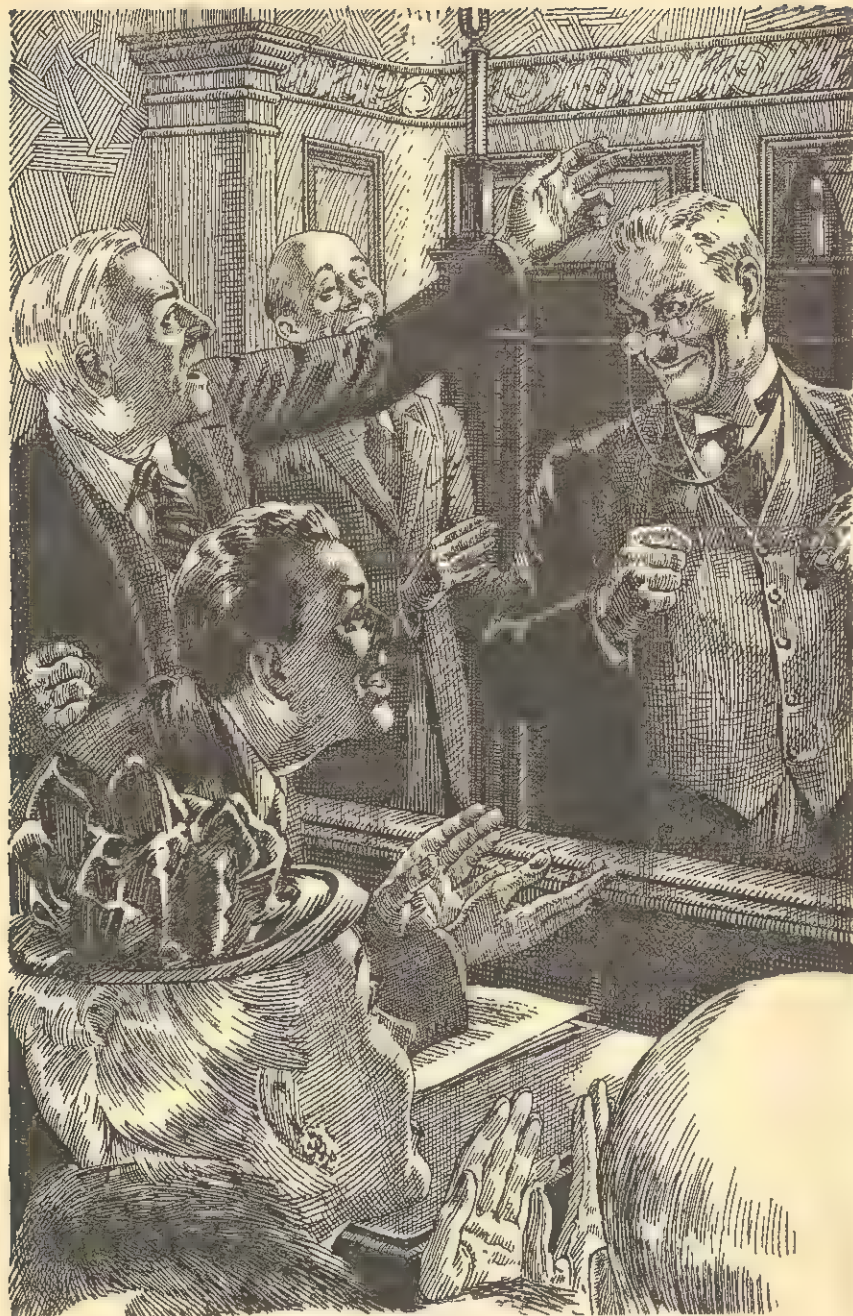
One with the sliding path he surrendered himself to that mounting glide. Something stronger than himself held him in a grip that seemed purposeful. And he was being drawn nearer—nearer—to the most astonishing and awe-inspiring sight man ever beheld!

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

By HENRY KUTTNER

Next Issue's Amazing Complete Scientifiction Novel





"Way down upon de Savannah River..."

JERRY IS A MAN

By ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

He was an anthropoid—but did that make him human or did it make him a mere ape? On the answer trembled the entire commercial destiny of the brave new world of the future!

CHAPTER I

To Order—One Pegasus

DON'T blame the Martians. The human race would have developed plasto-biology in any case. Look at the older registered Kennel Club breeds—glandular giants like the St. Bernard and the Great Dane, silly little atrocities like the Chihuahua and the Pekingese. Consider fancy goldfish.

The damage was done when Dr. Morgan produced new breeds of fruit flies by kicking around their chromosomes with X-rays. After that, the second generation of the Hiroshima survivors did not teach us anything new; those luckless monstrosities merely publicized standard genetic knowledge.

Mr and Mrs. Bronson van Vogel did not have social reform in mind when they went to the Phoenix Breeding Ranch; Mr. van Vogel simply wanted to buy a Pegasus. He had mentioned it at breakfast.

A COMPLETE FANTASTIC NOVELET



"Way down upon de Suwannee Ribber—"

JERRY IS A MAN

By ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

He was an anthropoid—but did that make him human or did it make him a mere ape? On the answer trembled the entire commercial destiny of the brave new world of the future!

CHAPTER I

To Order—One Pegasus

DON'T blame the Martians. The human race would have developed plasto-biology in any case. Look at the older registered Kennel Club breeds—glandular giants like the St. Bernard and the Great Dane, silly little atrocities like the Chihuahua and the Pekingese. Consider fancy goldfish.

The damage was done when Dr. Morgan produced new breeds of fruit flies by kicking around their chromosomes with X-rays. After that, the second generation of the Hiroshima survivors did not teach us anything new; those luckless monstrosities merely publicized standard genetic knowledge.

Mr. and Mrs. Bronson van Vogel did not have social reform in mind when they went to the Phoenix Breeding Ranch; Mr. van Vogel simply wanted to buy a Pegasus. He had mentioned it at breakfast.

A COMPLETE FANTASTIC NOVELET

"Are you tied up this morning, my dear?"

"Not especially. Why?"

"I'd like to run out to Arizona and order a Pegasus designed."

"A Pegasus? A flying horse? Why, my sweet?"

He grinned. "Just for fun. Pudgy Hartmann was around the club yesterday with a six-legged dachshund—must have been over a yard long. It was clever, but he swanked so much I want to give him something to stare at. Imagine, Martha—me landing on the Club 'copter platform on a winged horse. That'll snap his eyes back!"

She turned her eyes from the Jersey shore to look indulgently at her husband. She was not fooled; this would be expensive. But Brownie was such a dear!

"When do we start?"

They landed two hours earlier than they started. The airsign read, in letters fifty feet high:

PHOENIX BREEDING RANCH

Controlled Genetics—Licensed Labor Contractors

"Labor Contractors?" she read. "I thought this place was used just to burbank new animals."

"They both design and produce," he explained importantly. "They distribute through the mother corporation 'Workers'. You ought to know; you own a big chunk of Workers common."

"You mean I own a bunch of apes? Really?"

"Perhaps I didn't tell you. Haskell and I—" He leaned forward and informed the field that he would land manually; he was a bit proud of his piloting.

He switched off the robot and added, briefly as his attention was taken up by herding the ship down, "Haskell and I have been plowing your General Atomics dividends back into Workers, Inc. Good diversification—still plenty of dirty work for the anthropoids to do." He slapped the keys; the scream of the nose jets stopped conversation.

Bronson had called the manager in flight; they were met—not with red carpet, canopy and footmen, though the manager strove to give that impression.

"Mr. van Vogel? And Mrs. van Vogel! We are honored indeed!"

He ushered them into a tiny, luxurious uncar; they jeeped off the field, up a ramp, and into the lobby of the administration build-

ing. The manager, Mr. Blakesly, did not relax until he had seated them around a fountain in the lounge of his offices, struck cigarettes for them, and provided tall, cool drinks.

BRONSON van Vogel was bored by the attention, as it was obviously inspired by his wife's Dunn & Bradstreet rating; ten stars, a sunburst, and heavenly music. He preferred people who could convince him that he had invented the Briggs fortune, instead of marrying it.

"This is business, Blakesly. I've an order for you."

"So? Well, our facilities are at your disposal. What would you like, sir?"

"I want you to make me a Pegasus."

"A Pegasus? A flying horse?"

"Exactly."

Blakesly pursed his lips. "You seriously want a horse that will fly? An animal like the mythical Pegasus?"

"Yes, yes—that's what I said."

"You embarrass me, Mr. van Vogel. I assume you want a unique gift for your lady. How about a midget elephant, twenty inches high, perfectly housebroken, and able to read and write? He holds the stylus in his trunk—very cunning."

"Does he talk?" demanded Mrs. van Vogel.

"Well, now, my dear lady, his voice box, you know—and his tongue—he was not designed for speech. If you insist on it, I will see what our plasticians can do."

"Now, Martha—"

"You can have your Pegasus, Brownie, but I think I may want this toy elephant. May I see him?"

"Most surely. Hartstone!"

The air answered Blakesly. "Yes, boss?"

"Bring Napoleon to my lounge."

"Right away, sir."

"Now about your Pegasus, Mr. van Vogel. I see difficulties and I need expert advice. Dr. Cargrew is the real heart of this organization, the most eminent bio-designer—of terrestrial origin, of course—on the world today." He raised his voice to actuate relays.

"Dr. Cargrew!"

"What is it, Mr. Blakesly?"

"Doctor, will you favor me by coming to my office?"

"I'm busy. Later."

Mr. Blakesly excused himself, went into his inner office, then returned to say that Dr. Cargrew would be in shortly. In the meantime Napoleon showed up. The propor-

tions of his noble ancestors had been preserved in miniature; he looked like a statue of an elephant, come amazingly to life.

He took three measured steps into the lounge, then saluted them each with his trunk. In saluting Mrs. van Vogel he dropped on his knees as well.

"Oh, how cute!" she gurgled. "Come here, Napoleon."

The elephant looked at Blakesly, who nodded. Napoleon ambled over and laid his trunk across her lap. She scratched his ears; he moaned contentedly.

"Show the lady how you can write," ordered Blakesly. "Fetch your things from my room."

Napoleon waited while she finished treating a particularly satisfying itch, then oozed away to return shortly with several sheets of heavy white paper and an oversize pencil. He spread a sheet in front of Mrs. van Vogel, held it down daintily with a fore foot, grasped the pencil with his trunk finger, and printed in large, shaky letters, "I LIKE YOU."

"The darling!" She dropped to her knees and put her arms around his neck. "I simply must have him. How much is he?"

"Napoleon is part of a limited edition of six," Blakesly said carefully. "Do you want an exclusive model, or may the others be sold?"

"Oh, I don't care. I just want Nappie. Can I write him a note?"

"Certainly, Mrs. van Vogel. Print large letters and use Basic English. Napoleon knows most of it. His price, non-exclusive, is \$350,000. That includes five years salary for his attending veterinary."

"Give the gentleman a check, Brownie," she said over her shoulder.

"But Martha—"

"Don't be tiresome, Brownie." She turned back to her pet and began printing. She hardly looked up when Dr. Cargrew came in.

CARGREW was a chilly figure in white overalls and skull cap. He shook hands brusquely, struck a cigarette and sat down. Blakesly explained.

Cargrew shook his head. "It's a physical impossibility."

Van Vogel stood up. "I can see," he said distantly, "that I should have taken my custom to NuLife Laboratories. I came here because we have a financial interest in this firm and because I was naive enough to believe the claims of your advertisements."

"Siddown, young man!" Cargrew ordered. "Take your trade to those thumb-fingered idiots if you wish—but I warn you they couldn't grow wings on a grasshopper. First you listen to me.

"We can grow anything and make it live. I can make you a living thing—I won't call it an animal—the size and shape of that table over there. It wouldn't be good for anything, but it would be alive. It would ingest food, use chemical energy, give off excretions, and display irritability. But it would be a silly piece of manipulation. Mechanically a table and an animal are two different things. Their functions are different, so their shapes are different. Now I can make you a winged horse."

"You just said you couldn't."

"Don't interrupt. I can make a winged horse that will look just like the picture in the fairy stories. If you want to pay for it; we'll make it—we're in business. But it won't be able to fly."

"Why not?"

"Because it's not built for flying. The ancient who dreamed up that myth knew nothing about aerodynamics and still less about biology. He stuck wings on a horse—just stuck them on, thumb tacks and glue. But that doesn't make a flying machine. Remember, son, that an animal is a machine, primarily a heat engine with a control system to operate levers and hydraulic system, according to definite engineering laws. You savvy aerodynamics?"

"Well, I'm a pilot."

"Hummmph! Well, try to understand this. A horse hasn't got the heat engine for flight. He's a hayburner and that's not efficient. We might mess around with horse's insides so that he could live on a diet of nothing but sugar and then he might have enough energy to fly short distances. But he still would not look like the mythical Pegasus. To anchor his flying muscles he would need a breast bone maybe ten feet long. He might have to have as much as eighty feet wing spread. Folded, his wings would cover him like a tent. You're up against the cube-square disadvantage."

"Huh?"

Cargrew gestured impatiently. "Lift goes by the square of a given dimension; dead load by the cube of the same dimension, other things being equal. I might be able to make you a Pegasus the size of a cat without distorting the proportions too much."

"No, I want one I can ride. I don't mind the wing spread and I'll put up with the big breast bone. When can I have him?"

Cargrew looked disgusted and shrugged. "I'll have to consult with B'na Kreeth." He whistled and chirped; a portion of the wall facing them dissolved and they found themselves looking into a laboratory. A Martian, life-size, showed in the forepart of the three-dimensional picture.

When the creature chirruped back at Cargrew, Mrs. van Vogel looked up, then quickly looked away. She knew it was silly but she simply could not stand the sight of Martians—and the ones who had modified themselves to a semi-manlike form disgusted her the most.

After they had twittered and gestured at each other for a minute or two Cargrew turned back to van Vogel. "B'na says that you should forget it; it would take too long. He wants to know how you'd like a fine unicorn, or a pair, guaranteed to breed true?"

"Unicorns are old hat. How long would the Pegasus take?"

AFTER another squeaky-door conversation Cargrew answered, "Ten years probably, sixteen years on the guarantee."

"Ten years? That's ridiculous!"

Cargrew looked shirty. "I thought it would take fifty, but if B'na Kreeth says that he can do it in three to five generations, then he can do it. B'na is the finest bio-micrurgist on two planets. His chromosome surgery is unequalled. After all, young man, natural processes would take upwards of a million years to achieve the same result, if it were achieved at all. Do you expect to be able to buy miracles?"

Van Vogel had the grace to look sheepish. "Excuse me, Doctor. Let's forget it. Ten years really is too long. How about the other possibility? You said you could make a picture-book Pegasus as long as I did not insist on flight. Could I ride him? On the ground?"

"Oh, certainly. No good for polo, but you could ride him."

"I'll settle for that. Ask Benny Creeth, or whatever his name is, how long it will take."

The Martian had already faded from the screen.

"I don't need to ask him," Cargrew asserted. "This is my job—purely manipulation. B'na's collaboration is required only for rearrangement and transplanting of genes—true genetic work. I can let you have the beast in

eighteen months."

"Can't you do better than that?"

"What do you expect, man? It takes eleven months to grow a new-born colt. I want one month of design and planning. The embryo will be removed on the fourth day and will be developed in an extra-uterine capsule. I'll operate ten or twelve times during gestation, grafting and budding and other things you've never heard of. One year from now we'll have a baby colt, with wings. Thereafter I'll deliver to you a six-months-old Pegasus."

"I'll take it."

Cargrew made some notes, then read, "One alate horse, not capable of flight and not to breed true. Basic breed your choice—I suggest a Palomino, or an Arabian. Wings designed after a condor, in white. Simulated pin feathers with a grafted fringe of quill feathers, or reasonable facsimiles." He passed the sheet over. "Initial that and we'll start in advance of formal contract."

"It's a deal," agreed van Vogel. "What is the fee?" He placed his monogram under Cargrew's.

Cargrew made further notes and handed them to Blakesly—estimates of professional man-hours, technician man-hours, purchases, and overhead. He had padded the figures to subsidize his collateral research but even he raised his eyebrows at the dollars-and-cents interpretation Blakesly put on the data.

"That will be an even two million dollars."

Van Vogel hesitated; his wife had looked up at the mention of money. But she turned her attention back to the scholarly elephant.

Blakesly added hastily, "That is for an exclusive creation, of course."

"Naturally," van Vogel agreed briskly, and added the figure to the memorandum.

CHAPTER II

Workers Unlimited

VAN VOGEL was ready to return, but his wife insisted on seeing the "apes", as she termed the anthropoid workers. The discovery that she owned a considerable share in these sub-human creatures had intrigued her. Blakesly eagerly suggested a trip through the laboratories in which the

workers were developed from true apes.

They were arranged in seven buildings, the seven "Days of Creation". "First Day" was a large building occupied by Cargrew, his staff, his operating rooms, incubators, and laboratories. Martha van Vogel stared in horrified fascination at living organs and even complete embryos, living artificial lives sustained by clever glass and metal recirculating systems and exquisite automatic machinery.

She could not appreciate the techniques; it seemed depressing. She had about decided against plasto-biology when Napoleon, by tugging at her skirts, reminded her that it produced good things as well as horrors.

The building "Second Day" they did not enter; it was occupied by B'na Kreeth and his racial colleagues.

"We could not stay alive in it, you understand," Blakesly explained. Van Vogel nodded; his wife hurried on—she wanted no Martians, even behind plastiglass.

From there on the buildings were for development and production of commercial workers. "Third Day" was used for the development of variations in the anthropoids to meet constantly changing labor requirements. "Fourth Day" was a very large building devoted entirely to production-line incubators for commercial types of anthropoids. Blakesly explained that they had dispensed with normal birth.

"The policy permits exact control of forced variations, such as for size, and saves hundreds of thousands of worker-hours on the part of the female anthropoids."

Martha van Vogel was delighted with "Fifth Day," the anthropoid kindergarten where the little tykes learned to talk and were conditioned to the social patterns necessary to their station in life. They worked at simple tasks, such as sorting buttons and digging holes in sand piles, with pieces of candy given as incentives for fast and accurate work.

"Sixth Day" completed the anthropoids' educations. Each learned the particular sub-trade it would practice, cleaning, digging, and especially agricultural semi-skills such as weeding, thinning, and picking.

"One Nisei farmer working three neo-chimpanzees can grow as many vegetables as a dozen old-style farm hands," Blakesly asserted. "They really like to work—when we get through with them."

They admired the almost incredibly heavy tasks done by modified gorillas and stopped

to gaze at the little neo-Capuchins doing high picking on prop trees, then moved on toward "Seventh Day."

This building was used for the radioactive mutation of genes and was therefore located some distance away from the others. They had to walk, as the sidewalk was being repaired; the detour took them past workers' pens and barracks. Some of the anthropoids crowded up to the wire and began calling to them:

"Sigret! Sigret! Preese, Missy! Preese, Boss! Sigret!"

"What are they saying?" Martha van Vogel inquired.

"They are asking for cigarettes," Blakesly answered in annoyed tones. "They know better, but they are like children. Here—I'll put a stop to it." He stepped up to the wire and shouted to an elderly male, "Hey! Straw-boss!"

The worker addressed wore, in addition to the usual short canvas kilt, a bedraggled arm band. He turned and shuffled toward the fence.

"Strawboss," ordered Blakesly, "get those Joes away from here."

"Okay, Boss," the old fellow acknowledged and started cuffing those nearest him. "Scram, you Joes! Scram!"

"But I have some cigarettes," protested Mrs. van Vogel, "and I would gladly have given them some."

"It doesn't do to pamper them," the manager told her. "They have been taught that luxuries come only from work. I must apologize for my poor children; those in these pens are getting old and forgetting their manners."

SHE did not answer but moved further along the fence to where one old neo-chimp was pressed up against the wire, staring at them with soft, tragic eyes, like a child at a bakery window. He had taken no part in the jostling demand for tobacco and had been let alone by the strawboss.

"Would you like a cigarette?" she asked him.

"Preese, Missy."

She struck one which he accepted with fumbling grace, took a long, lung-filling drag and let the smoke trickle out his nostrils.

"Sankoo, Missy. Me Jerry."

"How do you do, Jerry?"

"Howdy, Missy." He bobbed down, bending his knees, ducking his head, and clasping

his hands to his chest, all in one movement.

"Come along, Martha." Her husband and Blakesly had moved in behind her.

"In a moment," she answered. "Brownie, meet my friend Jerry. Doesn't he look just like Uncle Albert? Except that he looks so sad. Why are you unhappy, Jerry?"

"They don't understand abstract ideas," put in Blakesly.

But Jerry surprised him. "Jerry sad," he announced in tones so doleful that Martha van Vogel did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Why, Jerry?" she asked gently. "Why are you so sad?"

"No work," he stated. "No sigret. No candy. No work."

"These are all old workers who have passed their usefulness," Blakesly repeated. "Idleness upsets them, but we have nothing for them to do."

"Well!" she said. "Then why don't you have them sort buttons, or something like that, such as the baby ones do?"

"They wouldn't even do that properly," Blakesly answered. "These workers are senile."

"Jerry isn't senile! You heard him talk."

"Well, perhaps not. Just a moment." He turned to the apeman, who was squatting down in order to scratch Napoleon's head with a long forefinger thrust through the fence. "You, Joe! Come here."

Blakesly felt around the worker's hairy neck and located a thin steel chain to which was attached a small metal tag. He studied it.

"You're right," he admitted. "He's not really over age, but his eyes are bad. I remember the lot—cataracts as a result of an unfortunate linked mutation." He shrugged.

"But that's no reason to let him grieve his heart out in idleness."

"Really, Mrs. van Vogel, you should not upset yourself about it. They don't stay in these pens long—only a few days at the most."

"Oh," she answered, somewhat mollified, "you have some other place to retire them to, then. Do you give them something to do there? You should—Jerry wants to work. Don't you, Jerry?"

The neo-chimp had been struggling to follow the conversation. He caught the last idea and grinned.

"Jerry work! Sure mike! Good worker." He flexed his fingers, then made fists, displaying fully opposed thumbs.

Mr. Blakesly seemed somewhat nonplussed. "Really, Mrs. van Vogel, there is no need. You see—" He stopped.

Van Vogel had been listening irritably. His wife's enthusiasms annoyed him, unless they were also his own. Furthermore he was beginning to blame Blakesly for his own recent extravagance and had a premonition that his wife would find some way to make him pay, very sweetly, for his indulgence.

Being annoyed with both of them, he chuckled in the perfect wrong remark. "Don't be silly, Martha. They don't retire them; they liquidate them."

IT TOOK a little time for the idea to soak in, but when it did she was furious. "Why—why—I never heard of such a thing! You ought to be ashamed. You—you would shoot your own grandmother!"

"Mrs. van Vogel—please!"

"Don't 'Mrs. van Vogel' me! It's got to stop—you hear me?" She looked around at the death pens, at the milling hundreds of old workers therein. "It's horrible. You work them until they can't work anymore, then you take away their little comforts, and you dispose of them. I wonder you don't eat them!"

"They do," her husband said brutally. "Dog food."

"What! Well, we'll put a stop to that!"

"Mrs. van Vogel," Blakesly pleaded. "Let me explain."

"Hummph! Go ahead. It had better be good."

"Well, it's like this—" His eye fell on Jerry, standing with worried expression at the fence. "Scram, Joe!" Jerry shuffled away.

"Wait, Jerry!" Mrs. van Vogel called out. Jerry paused uncertainly. "Tell him to come back," she ordered Blakesly.

The manager bit his lip, then called out, "Come back here."

He was beginning definitely to dislike Mrs. van Vogel, despite his automatic tendency to genuflect in the presence of a high credit rating. To be told how to run his own business—well, now, indeed!

"Mrs. van Vogel, I admire your humanitarian spirit but you don't understand the situation. We understand our workers and do what is best for them. They die painlessly before their disabilities can trouble them. They live happy lives, happier than yours or mine. We trim off the bad part of their lives, nothing more. And don't forget, these poor

beasts would never have been born had we not arranged it."

She shook her head. "Fiddlesticks! You'll be quoting the Bible at me next. There will be no more of it, Mr. Blakesly. I shall hold you personally responsible."

Blakesly looked bleak. "My responsibilities are to the directors."

"You think so?" She opened her purse and snatched out her telephone. So great was her agitation that she did not bother to call through, but signalled the local relay operator instead. "Phoenix? Get me Great New York, Murray Hill 9Q-4004, Mr. Haskell. Priority—star subscriber 777. Make it quick." She stood there, tapping her foot and glaring, until her business manager answered. "Haskell? This is Martha van Vogel. How much Workers, Incorporated, common do I own? No, no, never mind that—what percent? . . . so? Well, it's not enough. I want 51% by tomorrow morning. . . . All right, get proxies for the rest but get it. . . . I didn't ask you what it would cost; I said to get it. Get busy." She disconnected abruptly and turned to her husband. "We're leaving, Brownie, and we are taking Jerry with us. Mr. Blakesly, will you kindly have him taken out of that pen? Give him a check for the amount, Brownie."

"Now, Martha—"

"My mind is made up, Brownie."

Mr. Blakesly cleared his throat. It was going to be pleasant to thwart this woman.

"The workers are never sold. I'm sorry. It's a matter of policy."

"Very well then, I'll take a permanent lease."

"This worker has been removed from the labor market. He is not for lease."

"Am I going to have more trouble with you?"

"If you please, Madame! This worker is not available under any terms—but, as a courtesy to you, I am willing to transfer to you indentures for him, gratis. I want you to know that the policies of this firm are formed from a very real concern for the welfare of our charges as well as from the standpoint of good business practice. We therefore reserve the right to inspect at any time to assure ourselves that you are taking proper care of this worker."

There, he told himself savagely, that will stop her clock!

"Of course. Thank you, Mr. Blakesly. You are most gracious."

CHAPTER III

The Real McCoy

THE trip back to Great New York was not jolly. Napoleon hated it and let it be known. Jerry was patient but airsick. By the time they grounded the van Vogels were not on speaking terms.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. van Vogel," Haskell said. "The shares were simply not available. We should have had proxy on the O'Toole block but someone tied them up an hour before I reached them."

"Blakesly."

"Undoubtedly. You should not have tipped him off; you gave him time to warn his employers."

"Don't waste time telling me what mistakes I made yesterday. What are you going to do today?"

"My dear Mrs. van Vogel, what can I do? I'll carry out any instructions you care to give."

"Don't talk nonsense. You are supposed to be smarter than I am; that's why I pay you to do my thinking for me."

Mr. Haskell looked helpless.

His principal struck a cigarette so hard she broke it.

"Why isn't Wycoff here?"

"Really, Mrs. van Vogel, there are no special legal aspects. You want the stock; we can't buy it nor bind it. Therefore—"

"I pay Wycoff to know the legal angles. Get him."

Wycoff was leaving his office; Haskell caught him on a chase-me circuit.

"Alan," Haskell called out. "Comé to my office, will you? Oscar Haskell."

"Sorry. How about four o'clock?"

"Alan, I want you—now!" cut in the client's voice. "This is Martha van Vogel."

The little man shrugged helplessly. "Right away," he agreed. That woman—why hadn't he retired on his one hundred and twenty-fifth birthday, as his wife had urged him?

Ten minutes later he was listening to Haskell's explanations and his client's interruptions. When they had finished he spread his hands.

"What do you expect, Mrs. van Vogel? These workers are chattels. You have not been able to buy the property rights involved;

you are stopped. But I don't see what you are worked up about. They gave you the worker whose life you wanted preserved."

She spoke forcefully under her breath, before she answered him.

"That's not important. What is one worker among millions? I want to stop this killing, all of it."

Wycoff shook his head. "If you were able to prove that their methods of disposing of these beasts were inhumane, or that they were negligent of their physical welfare before destroying them, or that the destruction was wanton—"

"Wanton? It certainly is!"

"Probably not in a legal sense, my dear lady. There was a case, Julius Hartman et al. vs. Hartman Estate, 1972, I believe, in which a permanent injunction was granted against carrying out a term of the will which called for the destruction of a valuable collection of Persian cats. But in order to use that theory you would have to show that these creatures, when superannuated, are notwithstanding more valuable alive than dead. You cannot compel a person to maintain chattels at a loss."

"See here, Alan, I didn't get you over here to tell me how this can't be done. If what I want isn't legal, then get a law passed."

WYCOFF looked at Haskell, who looked embarrassed and answered:

"Well, the fact of the matter is, Mrs. van Vogel, that we have agreed with the other members of the Commonwealth Association not to subsidize any legislation during the incumbency of the present administration."

"How ridiculous! Why?"

"The Legislative Guild has brought out a new fair-practices code which we consider quite unfair, a sliding scale which penalizes the well-to-do—all very nice sounding, with special provisions for nominal fees for veterans' private bills and such things—but in fact the code is confiscatory. Even the Briggs Foundation can hardly afford to take a proper interest in public affairs under this so-called code."

"Hmmp! A fine day when legislators join unions—they are professional men. Bribes should be competitive. Get an injunction."

"Mrs. van Vogel," protested Wycoff, "how can you expect me to get an injunction against an organization which has no legal existence? In a legal sense, there is no Legislative Guild, just as the practice of assisting

legislation by subsidy has itself no legal existence."

"And babies come under cabbage leaves. Quit stalling me, gentlemen. What are you going to do?"

Wycoff spoke when he saw that Haskell did not intend to. "Mrs. van Vogel, I think we should retain a special Shyster."

"I don't employ Shysters, ever—I don't understand the way they think. I am a simple housewife, Alan."

Mr. Wycoff flinched at her self-designation while noting that he must not let her find out that the salary of his own staff Shyster was charged to her payroll. As convention required, he maintained the front of a simple, barefoot solicitor, but he had found out long ago that Martha van Vogel's problems required an occasional dose of the more exotic branch of the law.

"The man I have in mind is a creative artist," he insisted. "It is no more necessary to understand him than it is to understand the composer in order to appreciate a symphony. I do recommend that you talk with him, at least."

"Oh, very well! Get him up here."

"Here? My dear lady!" Haskell was shocked at the suggestion; Wycoff looked amazed. "It would not only cause any action you bring to be thrown out of court if it were known that you had consulted this man, but it would prejudice any Briggs enterprise for years."

Mrs. van Vogel shrugged. "You men. I never will understand the way you think. Why shouldn't one consult a Shyster as openly as one consults an Astrologer?"

James Roderick McCoy was not a large man, but he seemed large. He managed to dominate even so large a room as Mrs. van Vogel's salon. His business card read:

J. R. McCOY

"The Real McCoy"

Licensed Shyster—Fixing, Special Contacts, Angles.

All Work Guaranteed.

Telephone Skyline 9-8M4554

Ask for Mac

The number given was the pool room of the notorious Three Planets Club. He wasted no time on offices and kept his files in his head—the only safe place for them.

HE WAS sitting on the floor, attempting to teach Jerry to shoot craps, while Mrs. van Vogel explained her problems.

"What do you think, Mr. McCoy? Could we

approach it through the SPCA? My public relations staff could give it a build up."

McCoy got to his feet. "Jerry's eyes aren't so bad; he caught me trying to palm box cars off on him as a natural. No," he continued, "the SPCA angle is no good. It's what 'Workers' will expect. They'll be ready to prove that the anthropoids actually enjoy being killed off."

Jerry rattled the dice hopefully. "That's all, Jerry. Scram."

"Okay, Boss." The ape-man got to his feet and went to the big stereo which filled a corner of the room. Napoleon ambled after him and switched it on. Jerry punched a selector button and got a blues singer. Napoleon immediately punched another, then another and another until he got a loud but popular band. He stood there, beating out the rhythm with his trunk.

Jerry looked pained and switched it back to his blues singer. Napoleon stubbornly reached out with his prehensile nose and switched it off. Jerry used a swear word.

"Boys!" called out Mrs. van Vogel. "Quit squabbling. Jerry, let Nappie play what he wants to. You can play the stereo when Nappy has to take his nap."

"Okay, Missy Boss."

McCoy was interested. "Jerry likes music?"

"Like it? He loves it. He's been learning to sing."

"Huh? This I gotta hear."

"Certainly. Nappie—turn off the stereo." The elephant complied but managed to look put upon. "Now Jerry—'Jingle Bells.'" She led him in it:

"Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the day—," and he followed,

"Jinger bez, jinger bez, jinger awrah day; Oh, wot fun tiz to ride in one-hoss open sway."

He was flat, he was terrible. He looked ridiculous, patting out the time with one splay foot. But it was singing.

"Say, that's fast!" McCoy commented. "Too bad Nappie can't talk—we'd have a duet."

Jerry looked puzzled. "Nappie talk good," he stated. He bent over the elephant and spoke to him. Napoleon grunted and moaned back at him. "See, Boss?" Jerry said triumphantly.

"What did he say?"

"He say, 'Can Nappie pray stereo now?'"

"Very well, Jerry," Mrs. Van Vogel interceded. The ape man spoke to his chum

in whispers. Napoleon squealed and did not turn on the stereo.

"Jerry!" said his mistress. "I said nothing of the sort; he does *not* have to play your blues singer. Come away, Jerry. Nappie—play what you want to."

"You mean he tried to cheat?" McCoy inquired with interest.

"He certainly did."

"Hmm—Jerry's got the makings of a real citizen. Shave him and put shoes on him and he'd get by all right in the precinct I grew up in." He stared at the anthropoid. Jerry stared back, puzzled but patient.

Mrs. van Vogel had thrown away the dirty canvas kilt which was both his badge of servitude and a concession to propriety and had replaced it with a kilt in the bright Cameron war plaid, complete to sporan, and topped off with a Glengarry.

"Do you suppose he could learn to play the bagpipes?" McCoy asked. "I'm beginning to get an angle."

"Why, I don't know. What's your idea?"

McCoy squatted down cross-legged and began practicing rolls with his dice.

"Never mind," he answered when it suited him, "that angle's no good. But we're getting there." He rolled four naturals, one after the other. "You say Jerry still belongs to the Corporation?"

"In a titular sense, yes. I doubt if they will ever try to repossess him."

"I wish they would try." He scooped up the dice and stood up. "It's in the bag, sis. Forget it. I'll want to talk to your publicity man but you can quit worrying about it."

CHAPTER IV

May It Please the Court

IF course Mrs. van Vogel should have knocked before entering her husband's room—but then she would not have overheard what he was saying, nor to whom.

"That's right," she heard him say, "we haven't any further need for him. Take him away, the sooner the better. Just be sure the men you send have a signed order directing us to turn him over."

She was not apprehensive, as she did not understand the conversation, but merely

curious. She looked over her husband's shoulder at the video screen.

There she saw Blakesly's face. His voice was saying, "Very well, Mr. van Vogel, the anthropoid will be picked up tomorrow."

She strode up to the screen. "Just a minute, Mr. Blakesly—then, to her husband, "Brownie, what in the world do you think you are doing?"

The expression she surprised on his face was not one he had ever let her see before.

"Why don't you knock?"

"Maybe it's a good thing I didn't. Brownie, did I hear you right? Were you telling Mr. Blakesly to pick up Jerry?" She turned to the screen. "Was that it, Mr. Blakesly?"

"That is correct, Mrs. Van Vogel. And I must say I find this confusion most—"

"Stow it." She turned back. "Brownie, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"Martha, you are being preposterous. Between that elephant and that ape this place is a zoo. I actually caught your precious Jerry smoking my special cigars today—not to mention the fact that both of them play the stereo all day long until a man can't get a moment's peace. I certainly don't have to stand for such things in my own house."

"Whose house, Brownie?"

"That's beside the point. I will not stand for—"

"Never mind." She turned to the screen. "My husband seems to have lost his taste for exotic animals, Mr. Blakesly. Cancel the order for a pegasus."

"Martha!"

"Sauce for the goose, Brownie. I'll pay for your whims, but not for your tantrums. The contract is cancelled, Mr. Blakesly. Mr. Haskell will arrange the details."

Blakesly shrugged. "Your capricious behavior will cost you, of course. The penalties—"

"I said Mr. Haskell would arrange the details. One more thing, Mister Manager Blakesly—have you done as I told you?"

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean—are those poor creatures still alive and well?"

"That is not your business." He had, in fact, suspended the killings; the directors had not wanted to take any chances until they saw what the Briggs trust could manage, but Blakesly would not give her the satisfaction of knowing.

She looked at him as if he were a skipped dividend. "It's not, eh? Well, bear this in

mind, you cold-blooded little pigsqueak: I'm holding you personally responsible. If just one of them dies from *anything*, I'll have your skin for a rug." She flipped off the connection and turned to her husband. "Brownie—"

"It's useless to say anything," he cut in, in the cold voice he normally used to bring her to heel. "I shall be at the club. Good-bye!"

"That's just what I was going to suggest."

"What?"

"I'll have your clothes sent over. Do you have anything else in this house?"

HE stared at her. "Don't talk like a fool, Martha."

"I'm not talking like a fool." She looked him up and down. "My, but you are handsome, Brownie. I guess I was a fool to think I could buy a big hunk of man with a check-book. I guess a girl gets them free, or she doesn't get them at all. Thanks for the lesson." She turned and slammed out of the room and into her own suite.

Five minutes later, makeup repaired and nerves steadied by a few whiffs of Fly-Right, she called the pool room of the Three Planets Club. McCoy came to the screen carrying a cue.

"Oh, it's you, sugar puss. Well, snap it up—I've got four bits on this game."

"This is business."

"Okay, okay—spill it."

She told him the essentials. "I'm sorry about cancelling the flying horse contract, Mr. McCoy. I hope it won't make your job any harder. I'm afraid I lost my temper."

"Fine. Go lose it again."

"Huh?"

"You're barrelling down the groove, kid. Call Blakesly up again. Bawl him out. Tell him to keep his bailiffs away from you, or you'll stuff 'em and use them for hat racks. Dare him to take Jerry away from you."

"I don't understand you."

"You don't have to, girlie. Remember this: You can't have a bull fight until you get the bull mad enough to fight. Have Wycoff get a temporary injunction restraining Workers, Incorporated, from reclaiming Jerry. Have your boss press agent give me a buzz. Then you call in the newsboys and tell them what you think of Blakesly. Make it nasty. Tell them you intend to put a stop to this wholesale murder if it takes every cent you've got."

"Well—all right. Will you come to see me before I talk to them?"

"Nope—gotta get back to my game. Tomorrow, maybe. Don't fret about having cancelled that silly winged-horse deal. I always did think your old man was weak in the head, and it's saved you a nice piece of change. You'll need it when I send in my bill. Boy, am I going to clip you! Bye now."

The bright letters trailed around the sides of the Times Building: "World's Richest Woman Puts Up Fight For Ape Man." The giant video screen above showed a transcribe of Jerry, in his ridiculous Highland chief outfit.

A small army of private police surrounded the Briggs town house, while Mrs. van Vogel informed anyone who would listen, including several news services, that she would defend Jerry personally and to the death.

The public relations office of Workers, Incorporated, denied any intention of seizing Jerry; the denial got nowhere.

In the meantime technicians installed extra audio and video circuits in the largest courtroom in town, for one Jerry (no surname), described as a legal, permanent resident of these United States, had asked for a permanent injunction against the corporate person "Workers," its officers, employees, successors, or assignees, forbidding it to do him any physical harm and in particular forbidding it to kill him.

Through his attorney, the honorable and distinguished and stuffily respectable Augustus Pomfrey, Jerry brought the action in his own name.

MARTHA van Vogel sat in the courtroom as a spectator only, she was surrounded by secretaries, guards, maid, publicity men, and yes men. She had one television camera trained on her alone. She was nervous. McCoy had insisted on briefing Pomfrey through Wycoff, to keep Pomfrey from knowing that he was being helped by a Shyster. She had her own opinion of Pomfrey.

The McCoy had insisted that Jerry not wear his beautiful new kilt but had dressed him in faded dungaree trousers and jacket. It seemed poor theater to her.

Jerry himself worried her. He seemed confused by the lights and the noise and the crowd, about to go to pieces.

And McCoy had refused to go to the trial with her. He had told her that it was quite

impossible, that his mere presence would alienate the court, and Wycoff had backed him up. Men! Their minds were devious—they seemed to like twisted ways of doing things. It confirmed her opinion that men should not be allowed to vote.

But she felt lost without the immediate presence of McCoy's easy self-confidence. Away from him, she wondered why she had ever trusted such an important matter to an irresponsible, jumping jack, bird-brained clown like McCoy. She chewed her nails and wished he were present.

The panel of attorneys appearing for Workers, Incorporated, began by moving that the action be dismissed without trial, on the theory that Jerry was a chattel of the corporation, an integral part of it, and no more able to sue than the thumb can sue the brain.

The Honorable Augustus Pomfrey looked every inch the statesman as he bowed to the Court and to his opponents.

"It is indeed strange," he began, "to hear the second-hand voice of a legal fiction, a soulless, imaginary quantity called a corporate 'person,' argue that a flesh-and-blood creature, a being of hopes and longings and passions, has no legal existence. I see here beside me my poor cousin Jerry." He patted Jerry on the shoulder; the ape man, needing reassurance, slid a hand into his. It went over well.

"But when I look for this abstract fancy 'Workers,' what do I find? Nothing—some words on paper, some signed bits of foolscap—"

"If the Court please, a question," put in the opposition chief attorney, "does the learned counsel contend that a limited liability stock company cannot own property?"

"Will the counsel reply?" directed the judge.

"Thank you. My esteemed colleague has set up a straw man; I contended only that the question as to whether Jerry is a chattel of Workers, Incorporated, is immaterial, non-essential, irrelevant. I am a part of the corporate city of Great New York. Does that deny me my civil rights as a person of flesh and blood? In fact it does not even rob me of my rights to sue that civic corporation of which I am a part, if, in my opinion, I am wronged by it.

"We are met today in the mellow light of equity, rather than in the cold and narrow confines of law. It seems a fit time to dwell

on the strange absurdities we live by, where—under a nonentity of paper and legal fiction could deny the existence of this, our poor cousin. I ask that the learned attorneys for the corporation stipulate that Jerry does, in fact, exist, and let us get on with the action."

They huddled; the answer was "No."

"Very well. My client asks to be examined in order that the Court may determine his status and being."

"Objection! This anthropoid cannot be examined; he is a mere part and chattel of the respondent."

"That is what we are about to determine," the Court answered dryly. "Objection overruled."

"Go sit in that chair, Jerry."

"Objection! This beast cannot take an oath—it is beyond his comprehension."

"What have you to say to that, Counsel?"

"If it please the Court," answered Pomfrey, "the simplest thing to do is to put him in the chair and find out."

"Let him take the stand. The clerk will administer the oath." Martha van Vogel gripped the arms of her chair; McCoy had spent a full week training him for this. Would the poor thing blow up without McCoy to guide him?

The clerk droned through the oath; Jerry looked puzzled but patient.

"Your honor," said Pomfrey, "when young children must give testimony, it is customary to permit a little leeway in the wording, to fit their mental attainments. May I be permitted?" He walked up to Jerry.

"Jerry, my boy, are you a good worker?"

"Sure mike! Jerry good worker!"

"Maybe bad worker, huh? Lazy. Hide from strawboss."

"No, no, no! Jerry good worker. Dig. Weed. Not dig up vegetaber. Dig up weed. Work hard."

"You will see," Pomfrey addressed the Court, "that my client has very definite ideas of what is true and what is false. Now let us attempt to find out whether or not he has moral values which require him to tell the truth. Jerry—"

"Yes, Boss."

Pomfrey spread his hand in front of the anthropoid's face. "How many fingers do you see?"

Jerry reached out and ticked them off. "One—two—sree—four, uh—five."

"Six fingers, Jerry."

"Five, Boss."

"Six fingers, Jerry. I give you cigarette. Six."

"Five, Boss. Jerry not cheat."

Pomfrey spread his hands. "Will the Court accept him?"

CHAPTER V

Not Cold Charity

THE Court did. Martha van Vogel sighed. Jerry could not count very well and she had been afraid that he would forget his lines and accept the bribe. But he had been promised all the cigarettes he wanted and chocolate as well if he would remember to insist that five was five.

"I suggest," Pomfrey went on, "that the matter has been established. Jerry is an entity; if he can be accepted as a witness, then surely he may have his day in court. Even a dog may have his day in court. Will my esteemed colleagues stipulate?"

Workers, Incorporated, through its battery of lawyers, agreed—just in time, for the judge was beginning to cloud up. He had been much impressed by the little performance.

The tide was with him; Pomfrey used it. "If it please the Court and if the counsels for the respondent will permit, we can shorten these proceedings. I will state the theory under which relief is sought and then, by a few questions, it may be settled one way or another. I ask that it be stipulated that it was the intention of Workers, Incorporated, through its servants, to take the life of my client."

Stipulation was refused.

"So? Then I ask that the Court take judicial notice of the well known fact that these anthropoid workers are destroyed when they no longer show a profit; thereafter I will call witnesses, starting with Horace Blakesly, to show that Jerry was and presumably is under such sentence of death."

Another hurried huddle resulted in the stipulation that Jerry had, indeed, been scheduled for euthanasia.

"Then," said Pomfrey, "I will state my theory. Jerry is not an animal, but a man. It is not legal to kill—it is murder."

First there was silence, then the crowd gasped. People had grown used to animals

that talked and worked, but they were no more prepared to think of them as persons, humans, *men*, than were the haughty Roman citizens prepared to concede human feelings to their barbarian slaves.

Pomfrey let them have it while they were still groggy. "What is a man? A collection of living cells and tissues? A legal fiction, like this corporate 'person' that would take poor Jerry's life? No, a man is none of these things. A man is a collection of hopes and fears, of human longings, of aspirations greater than himself—more than the clay from which he came; less than the Creator which lifted him up from the clay. Jerry has been taken from his jungle and made something more than the poor creatures who were his ancestors, even as you and I. We ask that this Court recognize his manhood."

The opposing attorneys saw that the Court was moved; they drove in fast. An anthropoid, they contended, could not be a man because he lacked human shape and human intelligence. Pomfrey called his first witness—Master B'na Kreeth.

The Martian's normal bad temper had not been improved by being forced to wait around for three days in a travel tank, to say nothing of the indignity of having to interrupt his researches to take part in the childish pow-wows of terrestrials.

There was further delay to irritate him while Pomfrey forced the corporation attorneys to accept B'na as an expert witness. They wanted to refuse but could not—he was their own Director of Research. He also held voting control of all Martian-held Workers' stock, a fact unmentioned but hampering.

More delay while an interpreter was brought in to help administer the oath—B'na Kreeth, self-centered as all Martians, had never bothered to learn English.

He twittered and chirped in answer to the demand that he tell the truth, the whole truth, and so forth; the interpreter looked pained.

"He says he can't do it," he informed the judge.

POMFREY asked for exact translation. The interpreter looked uneasily at the judge.

"He says that if he told the whole truth you fools—not 'fools' exactly; it's a Martian word meaning a sort of headless worm—would not understand it."

The court discussed the idea of contempt briefly. When the Martian understood that he was about to be forced to remain in a travel tank for thirty days he came off his high horse and agreed to tell the truth as adequately as was possible. He was accepted as a witness.

"Are you a man?" demanded Pomfrey.

"Under your laws and by your standards I am a man."

"By what theory? Your body is unlike ours; you cannot even live in our air. You do not speak our language; your ideas are alien to us. How can you be a man?"

The Martian answered carefully: "*I quote from the Terra-Martian Treaty, which you must accept as supreme law. 'All members of the Great Race, while sojourning on the Third Planet, shall have all the rights and prerogatives of the native dominant race of the Second Planet.' This clause has been interpreted by the Bi-Planet Tribunal to mean that members of the Great Race are 'men,' whatever that may be.*"

"Why do you refer to your sort as the 'Great Race'?"

"Because of our superior intelligence."

"Superior to men?"

"We are men."

"Superior to the intelligence of earth men?"

"That is self-evident."

"Just as we are superior in intelligence to this poor creature Jerry?"

"That is not self-evident."

"Finished with the witness," announced Pomfrey.

The opposition counsels should have left bad-enough alone; instead they tried to get B'na Kreeth to define the difference in intelligence between humans and worker-anthropoids. Master B'na explained meticulously that cultural differences masked the intrinsic differences, if any, and that, in any case, both anthropoids and men made so little use of their respective potential intelligences that it was really too early to tell which race would turn out to be the superior race in the Third Planet.

He had just begun to discuss how a truly superior race could be bred by combining the best features of anthropoids and men when he was hastily asked to "stand down."

"May it please the Court," said Pomfrey, "we have not advanced the theory; we have merely disposed of respondent's contention that a particular shape and a particular de-

gree of intelligence are necessary to manhood. I now ask that the petitioner be recalled to the stand that the Court may determine whether he is, in truth, human."

"If the learned Court please—" The battery of lawyers had been in a huddle ever since B'na Kreeth's travel tank had been removed from the room; the chief counsel now spoke.

"The object of the petition appears to be to protect the life of this chattel. There is no need to draw out these proceedings; respondent stipulates that this chattel will be allowed to die a natural death in the hands of its present custodian and moves that the action be dismissed."

"What do you say to that?" the Court asked Pomfrey.

Pomfrey visibly gathered his toga about him. "We ask not for cold charity from this corporation, but for the justice of the Court. We ask that Jerry's humanity be established as a matter of law. Not for him to vote, nor to hold property, nor to be relieved of special police regulations appropriate to his group—but we do ask that he be adjudged at least as human as that aquarium monstrosity just removed from this court room!"

The judge turned to Jerry. "Is that what you want, Jerry?"

Jerry looked uneasily at Pomfrey, then said, "Okay, Boss."

"Come up to the chair."

"One moment—" The opposition chief counsel seemed flurried. "I ask the Court to consider that a ruling in this matter may affect a long established commercial practice necessary to the economic life of—"

"Objection!" Pomfrey was on his feet, bristling. "Never have I heard a more outrageous attempt to prejudice a decision. My esteemed colleague might as well ask the Court to decide a murder case from political considerations. I protest—"

"Never mind," said the Court. "The suggestion will be ignored. Proceed with your witness."

Pomfrey bowed. "We are exploring the meaning of this strange thing called 'manhood.' We have seen that it is not a matter of shape, nor race, nor planet of birth, nor of acuteness of mind. Truly, it cannot be defined, yet it may be experienced. It can reach from heart to heart, from spirit to spirit." He turned to Jerry. "Jerry—will you sing your new song for the judge?"

"Sure mike." Jerry looked uneasily up at the whirring cameras, the mikes, and the ikes, then cleared his throat:

"Way down upon de Suwannee Ribber

Far, far away;

Dere's where my heart is turning ebber—"

The applause scared him out of his wits; the banging of the gavel frightened him still more—but it mattered not; the issue was no longer in doubt. Jerry was a man.



Coming in the Next Issue

THE TIMELESS TOMORROW

*A Complete Fantastic Novelet of the
Prophecies of Nostradamus*

BY MANLY WADE WELLMAN



"Oh," moaned Hank, "I wish I was safe back home"

THE TIME TWISTER

By FRANCIS FLAGG and WEAVER WRIGHT

Plunged into the shuddering vistas of time-space, Professor Streiff and his farmhand co-pilot receive a terrific jolt!

WHILE learned in many and abstruse problems, Franklyn Streiff's title of professor was an honorary one, bestowed on him by a sometimes impressed if not always admiring public. The eccentric inventor had for many years lived on his Kansas farm with a spinster sister who did not always appreciate the colossal erudition, not to say genius, of her brother.

Kate keenly resented the time and money

he "squandered on foolish experiments." And for twenty years he had not done a lick of farm work.

"I am a scientist, not a tiller of the soil," the Professor had told his sister with proper pride. "Hire a man, if you will. Run the farm, if you want to. As for me, I ask but to be left in peace."

So Kate had hired Hank Weston, a thoughtful individual who during his years

of servitude had listened to the Professor with commendable attention.

It little became Hank, who had a vast respect for learning, to contradict the Professor's findings on any subject. But when the latter began to speculate on the unity of time and space, pointing out that it was just as possible to travel in the one as the other, Hank felt called upon to remonstrate.

"You mean to say," he questioned incredulously, "that I could go back a hundred years?"

"If you had the proper machine in which to travel, yes."

"But that'd take me back to before I was born."

The Professor smiled tolerantly.

"Look at this diagram, Hank. This line is the time continuum. It incorporates space, too. This dot is you. It doesn't matter when you were born, or when you will die: You exist right now, that's the fact. Traveling into the past or future wouldn't make you grow any younger or older. Such a thought is naïve. Let me demonstrate the mechanics of it for you. If NU equals TS , and we calculate with non-Euclidean mathematics..."

The Professor busily sketched and Hank stared owlishly. Finally Streiff had a blackboard that could have been submitted in a surrealists' art exhibit and Hank had an expression of incomprehension. "It don't sound reasonable," the farmhand objected. "If I went back—"

"I know," interjected the Professor, "if you went back you might meet your own father as a young man and you'd be older than he, or maybe he and your mother would be kids going to school."

"Haw, haw! That'd be funny, that would."

"Considered superficially," gritted Prof. Streiff, "such would seem to be the case; but it is impossible to say so for certain. The unpredictable action of electrons in the atom, the riddle of the nebulae and stars and human life in an exploding universe, hint that we may expect to be surprised by the vagaries of time.

"Wishing to live forever, for instance, may be as absurd as desiring to grow in size forever. That is an interesting speculation—I must make a note of it. However, the paradoxes of which you prate may exist nowhere but in your imagination. That," he declared didactically, "is what I propose to discover beyond peradventure."

Streiff became confidential in manner.

"This machine with which you have sometimes given me a helping hand through the years, Hank, and often inquired the nature of,"—he pointed to a curious contrivance occupying the center of his laboratory and workshop—"is nothing less than a pan-chronicon. A time-machine!"

Hank's face fell into the pattern employed by the people who were skeptical of the Wright Bros., of Columbus, and, a bit further back, in the unrecorded days of pre-history, the quasi-humans who questioned the pantomime of Brut, the caveman, when he indicated that the flint he would strike on rock would make a wood-eating flower blossom.

"You're joking, Professor," he suggested.

"Joking! I was never more serious in my life. Another week and it will be ready. Then, Hank, then"—his long face took on a look of triumph—"I shall prove that which will make me greater than Newton and Einstein, a more marvelous explorer than Columbus or Byrd. Why, they won't be in it with me at all. And *you*, my friend, can say you knew me intimately, can boast of my acquaintance. Ah, Hank, how proud of me you will be then. How this flouting countryside will honor its famous citizen!"

NOW Hank Weston was not a complete fool. But after all, despite his sagelike reflections and desultory readings (mostly in magazine sections of Sunday papers where marvelous feats of science are often set forth with dramatic illustrations), he was a simple sort who had lived his days in rural surroundings. He knew enough to suspect that there were thousands of strange things he didn't know. Therefore the professor found him a receptive audience.

As Hank watched the queer machine take shape, as he even helped give the finishing touches to its construction, the sight of the machinery, the monologues of the enthusiastic Streiff, the dynamic dream of time-travel, exerted over him a mesmeric influence. Kate Streiff was caustic about his absent-mindedness.

"Don't forget you're hired to do farm work," she said bitingly, "and not to listen to that crazy brother of mine. Hank Weston, if I catch you sneaking into his workshop again, when you oughtta be hoeing corn, offa this farm you go!"

Yes," said Hank, meekly, but the Professor's laboratory and oratory were twin magnets that drew his iron will and melted it

down. So one windy summer's afternoon he crept away from the heat and his haying to visit the forbidden barn.

He found the Professor in a fever of elation.

"Hank, you are just in time! Look—it's finished!"

Hank eyed "it" doubtfully. It was the strangest contraption he had ever seen. Not even the Sunday supplements had ever dished up an odder illustration. Partly it resembled a top, and then again one could trace a corkscrew likeness in its shaft. Two cushioned seats set astride brief horsebacks, saddle-wise.

"Will it work?" Hank asked hoarsely.

"Work?" barked the Professor. "Of course it will work!"

"How do you know?"

"Because I've experimented with the cat. I'll show you."

He picked up a spitting feline and secured it to one of the seats.

"I deflect this lever, so," he said, standing back.

Hank's eyes nearly parted company with their sockets as he watched the result. The topline contrivance spun, and as it spun the corkscrew shaft wove in and out in a most bewildering fashion. As the speed increased, the machine became a blur in which nothing substantial was discernible. Indeed, whether owing to the camouflaged lines and angles of its construction or otherwise, one might well be forgiven for imagining that cat and machine had disappeared.

After a minute, the Professor once more manipulated the lever and the bizarre mechanism with its load gradually came back into visibility and ceased rotating. An unhappy cat hung limply on the seat, mewing melancholically.

"You see!" said Streiff triumphantly.

"Huh?" grunted his undecided acolyte.

"She went over all right," crowed the Professor.

"Over where?"

"Into the future, of course!"

"You mean—the cat—went ahead—in time?"

"Didn't you see what happened with your own eyes?" the Professor snapped.

"Yeah," faltered the farm-hand, "but are you sure?"

"Certain! Where else could it have gone? And now," he added excitedly, "it only remains for us to undertake the trip."

"Us!" Hank's head resembled a revolving door. "Nossir, not me, Professor! I'm not risking my life in no contraption like that. It ain't safe."

"Safe? Why of course it's safe!"

"How do you know?"

"Didn't the cat come back all right?"

"Well, I'm no cat."

Prof. Streiff regarded Hank severely.

"Hank, it can't be that you're afraid. My dear friend, what cowardly weakness is this? Consider Columbus, Magellan, Perry, Byrd. Did they feel fear? Perhaps, but they conquered such unmanly symptoms. In that lay their greatness. Strength of character, Hank. They had strength of character, and their names are immortal. Your name too can be immortal!

"Think of it, Hank: Posterity will inscribe it in its annals along with those of Pasteur, Darwin, Koch, Madame Curie. 'Hank Weston, copilot with Professor Franklyn Leonard Streiff, of the first time-machine ever invented'! That's the way it'll read under your portrait in the pantheon of fame. Can you forego such a chance? No! Opportunity knocks but once."

The professor produced from a locker a flask of amber fluid.

"Here, drink of this." He poured out two generous tumblers full. "A toast to our coming flight! Down it, man! Ah, that puts the sparkle in the eyes and the stout courage in the heart. Have another. Hank, this day will go ringing down the corridors of time. Finish the bottle, my friend. Now take your seat there. Yes, there—your feet in the stirrups. I seat myself beside you. What's that?"

A shrill feminine voice was heard calling loudly,

"Franklyn! Franklyn!"

"Ssh-sh," admonished the Professor. "Keep still, it's Kate—always sticking her nose in where it isn't wanted."

A rush of steps came along the passageway, fists banged at the bolted door.

"Frank! Hank! Are you there?"

"Don't speak, on your life," breathed the Professor.

Hank had no intention of speaking.

"Oh," cried Kate frustratedly, "where can they be!"

They heard, in rhythm with their pumping hearts, her feet pound down the stairs. From a distance the sound of her voice came back, still shouting, "Franklyn! Hank!"

The Professor shook his head.

"She is, I should judge, vastly excited over something. Quite unseemly of her. Ah me, how many times I've tried to reason with that woman. Poise, Hank, poise. Cultivate it as a flower, my friend. And now, we are ready at last—ready to flee the petty irritations of the moment. Your feet are secure, your hands are gripping the bars? O, glorious moment!" And he knifed the lever.

THE time-machine gave a wild lurch—like a merry-go-round gone mad it spun. What the Professor expected is hard to say, but whatever it was, crystallized reality surpassed it. With a sudden roar of thunder the whole world turned black, existence split asunder.

He and Hank were pathetic straws that a mighty wind buffeted, beat. There was a rending and a tearing, a howling fury of tortured air surrounded and sought to destroy them. They and the machine seemed whirling down the everlasting vistas of space.

Then with a sickening swoop and a terrible jolt, their journey ceased. Consciousness, too, came to an end. . . .

"Professor! Oh, Professor!"

To the thin wail of Hank's voice Streiff came back to life and reason. His mouth was full of dust, his body full of aches, his head a throbbing pain. Yet miraculously he was alive.

From a clear sky the sun shone torridly. The Professor blinked painfully, sat up, regarded the scene about him ruefully. He groaned.

The garret was gone; the farmhouse and farm buildings had also disappeared. Some twenty feet away lay what was left of the time-machine, a twisted mass of metal and plastic. A row of young cotton trees was missing. Not far off an old foundation showed where a house once might have stood. Change, change—everything was unmistakably changed. Despite his aches and bruises, Franklyn Leonard Streiff, first time-traveler, surged to his feet. There could be no doubt about it—this was the future!

"Victory, Hank! Victory!" he cried. "My machine was a perfect success. We have traveled in time!"

Hank stared at him without enthusiasm.

"I think," he said woefully, "that my neck is broken."

"Nonsense, nothing of the sort. Stand up and let me look you over. How could your

neck be broken when you can twist it so? Ah, Hank, I'm afraid you lack the spirit of a true explorer and scientist. Forget your minor aches, man, and realize the stupendousness of the thing we have done. As far as I can calculate, we have journeyed some hundred odd years into the future."

"And how," demanded Hank practically, "are we going to get back?"

The Professor stared perplexedly at the scrapped machine, strewn unceremoniously on the sands of time.

"By heaven," he confessed, "I hadn't thought of that!" After a moment he brightened. "But we may not *want* to return, had you thought of that? But everything in its place. The people of the 21st Century are undoubtedly skilled mechanics, and could reconstruct the panchronicon from my instructions. Ah, Hank, what marvelous advances science and invention must have made in a century! Time enough for mankind to have united peacefully into a Wellsian Egalitarian World. *Kredeble, la mondo paca parolas Esperanton—semantike korektita.*"

"Huh?" Hank ejaculated at the latter. "Is that Spanish or Latin, Professor?"

"Neither, Hank. You remember the artificial language I learned in my youth. Esperanto. I said it is credible that the peaceful world will now be speaking the scientifically synthesized auxiliary tongue, the symbology of its vocabulary having been corrected semantically, of course."

"Oh. And atomic power and rocket ships to—" Hank started to speculate, but interrupted himself with a yell.

"My God, look! What's that?"

The Professor stared.

Loping across country with prodigious leaps, spindle legs flashing, small head set at the end of an enormously long and thin neck which raised it some fifteen feet from the ground, was the most bizarre-looking creature imaginable. It passed, and in seeming pursuit lumbered a colossus of a beast bearing on its leathery back a dark-skinned man in a breech-clout. The rider brandished a long spear and shouted wild and unintelligible words.

The two wrecked time-travelers goggled. A giraffe in Kansas! And being hunted by a barbarian on an elephant! The combination was too utterly fantastic and incredible.

"Oh," moaned Hank, "I wish I was safe back home."

They made themselves as inconspicuous as

possible. Conspicuity under the circumstances would have been inviting catastrophe, they felt.

A dozen zebras whirled by; and after them, on gaily caparisoned horses, came a band of copper-colored hunters, stripped to the waist, long hair floating loose, wearing fringed trousers and leggings.

The hunters yelled, and urged their mounts to greater speed.

"Really," said Prof. Streiff, scratching his nose, "really, the people of the future appear to have odd habits! I wonder if I didn't deflect the switch a trifle too hard and go into the past? Or perhaps the Asiatics have somehow overthrown America. Elephants and giraffes on Kansas plains might be explained by—"

The growl which interrupted his theorizing was explained by a huge Numidian lion which he turned to find regarding him with a meditative look from a scant ten yards' distance. Hank saw the king of beasts a second later.

AS THE pair stared, horror-stricken, the tawny cat opened its cavernous mouth and again there issued from it a rumbling roar. It is only fair to record that the Professor's foot slipped, otherwise he would have beaten Hank on the getaway by three seconds flat. As it was, despite his wrenched knee, he was neck and neck with his copilot when they dived over a section of the foundation on which a house had once stood.

Had either glanced back they would have seen the lion, like a big puzzled persian, squatting on its haunches and following their flight with inquisitive eyes. But they had no time to glance back. All energies and faculties were concentrated on finding a two-man hole with no room for a lion.

And miraculously enough the hole presented itself for their accommodation. A

section of cellar wall swung outward disclosing a dark burrow into which they unanimously flung themselves, almost bowling over as they did so the person who had opened the door.

"Shut it quick!" screamed the Professor, "there's a savage lion outside!"

The door shut with a bang.

"Land's sakes," complained a woman's high-pitched querulous voice, a voice inexplicably familiar to both their ears, "so here you are at last."

On his hands and knees in the gloom, breathless from his headlong flight, Kate Streiff's bewildered brother babbled, "What year is this?"

"What year! Well, I always said, Franklyn, you weren't quite right, and now I know it! What's more, you're making as big a dumb idiot outta Hank Weston.

"When I heard the radio warning about the tornado and saw we was right in the path of that twister, I tried to warn you two to git in the storm-cellar. Hammered on your door, I did, but I guess you were gallivantin' round, or," with a suspicious sniff, "out boozing. Pity you weren't killed, the both of you!"

With a groan of disillusionment the Professor buried his head in his arms. They hadn't traveled in time after all. He and Hank were still in 1947, and—a cyclone had devastated the farm! Oh, it couldn't be true, all his high hopes dashed like this. In one last feeble attempt to save the situation he pleaded, "But the lion, the elephant, the giraffe and zebras—where did they all come from?"

"I guess," said Kate, "the twister must have struck Lao Bros. Circus that was showing over at Edgeville, and some of the animals got loose."

The strangling noises from his throat that Prof. Streiff tried to suppress in the darkness were despairingly animalistic in nature.

Coming Next Issue

QUARANTINE

A Novelet of the Metallic Plague

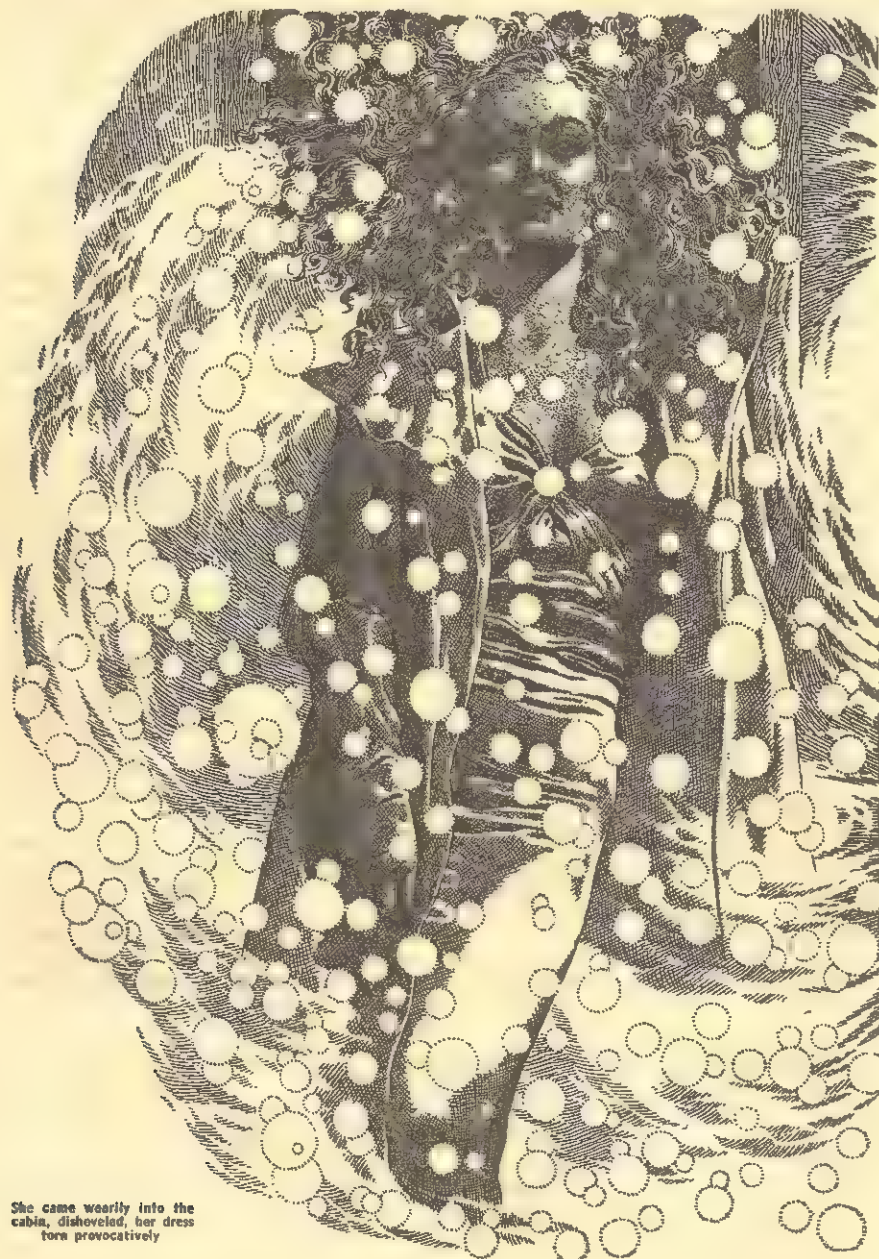
By GEORGE O. SMITH

AND MANY OTHER UNUSUAL STORIES

A COMPLETE SIMON TEMPLAR NOVELET



She came wearily into the
cabin, disheveled, her dress
torn provocatively



She came wearily into the cabin, dishoveled, her dress torn provocatively

The Darker Drink

By LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Saint is a man of countless adventures, but never one so strange as this, in which he lives another's nightmare!

CHAPTER I

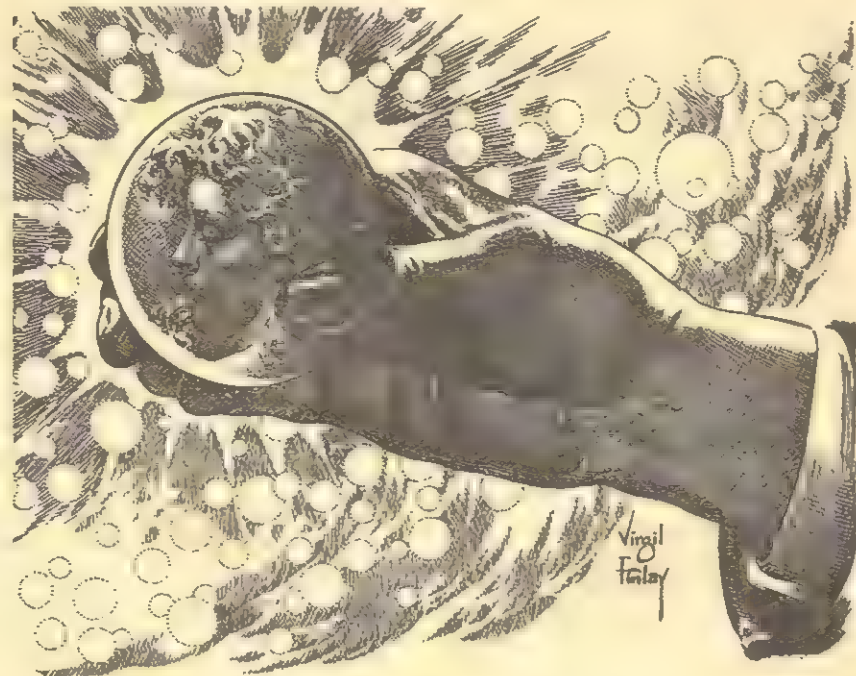
Cabin in the Pines

SIMON TEMPLAR looked up from the frying pan in which six mountain trout were developing a crisp golden tan. Above the gentle sputter of grease the sound of feet on dry pine needles crackled through the cabin window.

It didn't cross his mind that the sound carried menace, for it was twilight in the Sierras and the dusky calm stirred only with the rustling of nature at peace.

The Saint also was at peace. In spite of everything his enemies might have said, there actually were times when peace was the main preoccupation of that fantastic free-booter; when hills and blue sky were high enough adventure and baiting a hook was respite enough from baiting policemen or promoters.

In such a mood he had jumped at the invitation to join a friend in a week of hunting and fishing in the High Sierras—a friend who had been recalled to town on urgent business almost as soon as they arrived, leaving the Saint in by no means melancholy solitude,



Virgil
F. L. Lay

The Darker Drink

By LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Saint is a man of countless adventures, but never one so strange as this, in which he lives another's nightmare!

CHAPTER I

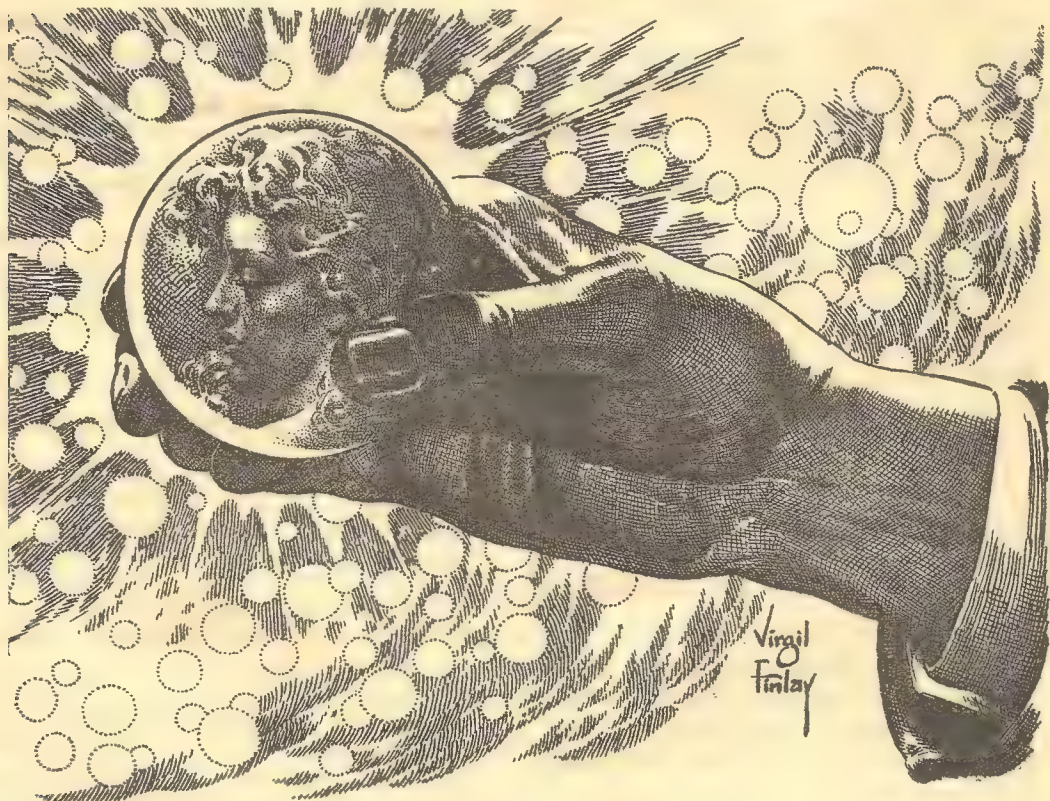
Cabin in the Pines

SIMON TEMPLAR looked up from the frying pan in which six mountain trout were developing a crisp golden tan. Above the gentle sputter of grease the sound of feet on dry pine needles crackled through the cabin window.

It didn't cross his mind that the sound carried menace, for it was twilight in the Sierras and the dusky calm stirred only with the rustling of nature at peace.

The Saint also was at peace. In spite of everything his enemies might have said, there actually were times when peace was the main preoccupation of that fantastic free-booter; when hills and blue sky were high enough adventure and baiting a hook was respite enough from baiting policemen or promoters.

In such a mood he had jumped at the invitation to join a friend in a week of hunting and fishing in the High Sierras—a friend who had been recalled to town on urgent business almost as soon as they arrived, leaving the Saint in by no means melancholy solitude,



for Simon Templar could always put up with his own company.

The footsteps came nearer with a kind of desperate urgency. Simon moved the frying pan off the flames and flowed, rather than walked, to where he could see through windows in two directions.

A man came out of the pines. He was traveling on the short side of a dead run but straining with every gasping breath to step up his speed. He came, hatless and coatless, across the pine-carpeted clearing toward the cabin door.

He burst through it—and in spite of his relaxation the Saint felt a simmer of anticipatory approval. If his solitude had to be intruded on this was the way it should happen. Unannounced. At a dead run.

The visitor slammed the door, shot the bolt, whirled around and seemed about to fold in the middle. He saw the Saint. His jaw sagged, swung adrift on its hinges for a moment, then imitated a steel trap.

After the sharp click of his teeth, he said, "How did you get in here? Where's Dawn?"

"Dawn?" Simon echoed lazily. "If you're referring to the rosy-fingered goddess who peels away the darkness each morning she's on the twelve hour shift, chum. She'll be around at the regular time."

"I never dreamed you here," the man said. "Who are you?"

"You dropped a word," the Saint said. "I never dreamed you *were* here' makes more sense."

"Rats, brother. You're part of my dream, and I never saw you before. You don't even have a name. All the others have, complete with backgrounds. But I can't place you. Funny, I—look here, you're not real, are you?"

"The last time I pinched myself I yelped."

"This is crazy," the man muttered.

He walked across the pine floor to within a couple of feet of the Saint. He was breathing easier now and the Saint examined him impassively.

He was big, only a shade under the Saint's

six feet two, with sandy hair, a square jaw and hard brown eyes.

"May I?" he said, and pinched the Saint. He sighed. "I was afraid this was happening. When I put my arms around Dawn Winter in my dreams she—"

"Please," the Saint broke in. "Gentlemen don't go into lurid detail after the lady has a name."

"Oh, she's only part of *my* dream." The stranger stared into space and an almost tangible aura of desire formed about him. "Lord!" he whispered. "I really dreamed up something in her."

"We must swap reminiscences some day," the Saint said. "But at the moment the pin-scented breeze is ladden with threshings in the underbrush."

"I've got to hide. Quick! Where can I get out of sight?"

The Saint waved expressively at the single room. In its 400 square feet one might hide a large bird if it were camouflaged as an atlas or something but that would be about the limit.

FURTHERMORE two bunk beds were made with hospital precision, and even a marble would have bulged under their tight covers. The deck chairs wouldn't offer sanctuary for even an undernourished mouse, the table was high and wide open beneath the rough top and the small bookcase was made to display its contents.

"If we had time," the Saint mused, "I could candy stripe you—if I had some red paint—and put on a barber's smock. Or—er—you say you're dreaming all this?"

"That's right."

"Then why don't you wake up—and vanish?"

The Saint's visitor unhappily gnawed his full underlip.

"I always have before, when the going got tough, but—oh, heck, I don't know what's going on but I don't want to die—even in my dream. Death is so—so—"

"Permanent?"

"Mmm, I guess. Listen, would you be a pal and try to steer these guys away? They're after me."

"Why should I?"

"Yeah," the man said. "You don't owe me a thing but I'm trying to help Dawn. She—"

He broke off to fish an object out of his watch pocket. This was a small chamois bag and out of it he took something that pulsed

*So when that Angel of the Darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall
not shrink.*

—OMAR KHAYYAM

with incredible fires. He handed it to the Saint.

"That's Dawn."

The circular fire opal blazed with living beauty—blue, green, gold, cerise, chartreuse—and the Saint gasped with reverent wonder as he looked at the cameo carved in the unbelievable gem.

There is beauty to which one can put a name. There is beauty that inspires awe, bravery, fear, lust, greed, passion. There is beauty that softens the savage blows of fate. There is beauty that drives to high adventure, to violence.

That stone, and above all the face cut eternally on its incandescent surface, was beauty beyond belief. No man could look on that face and ever know complete peace again.

She was the lily maid of Astelot, the lost loveliness that all men seek and never find, the nameless desire that haunts the ragged edge of sleep, that curls a lonely smile and sends vacant eyes searching far spaces.

Her face was made for—and of? The Saint asked himself—dreaming.

"Count me in, old boy."

He went outside. Through the dusky stillness the faroff unseen feet pounded nearer.

The feet were four. The men, with mathematical logic, two. One might be a jockey, the other a weight lifter. They tore out of the forest, confronted the Saint.

"Did you see a kind of big dopey-lookin' lug?" the jockey asked.

The Saint pointed to the other side of the clearing, where the hill pitched down.

"He went that way—in a tremendous rush."

"Thanks, pal."

They were off, hot on the imaginary trail, and the sounds of their passage soon faded. The Saint went inside.

"They'll be back," he said. "But meanwhile we can clear up a few points. Could you down a brace of trout? They've probably cooled enough to eat."

"What do you mean, they'll be back?"

"It's inevitable," Simon pointed out as he put coffee on, set the table and gathered cutlery. "They won't find you. They want to find you. So they'll be back with questions. Since those questions will be directed at me I'd like to know what not to answer."

"Who are you?"

"Who are you?" the Saint countered.

"I'm—oh, blast! The guy you're looking at is Big Bill Holbrook. But he's only something I dreamed up. I'm really Andrew Faulks, and I'm asleep in Glendale, California."

"And I am the queen of Romania."

"Sure, I know. You don't believe it. Who would? But since you've got me out of a tight spot for the time being I'd like to tell you what I've never told anybody. But who am I telling?"

"I'm Simon Templar," said the Saint and waited for a reaction.

"No!" Holbrook-Faulks breathed. "The Saint! What beautiful, wonderful luck. And isn't it just like a bank clerk to work the Saint into his dream?" He paused for breath. "Robin Hood of modern crime, the twentieth century's brightest buccaneer, the demon with dames, the headache of cops and crooks alike. What a sixteen-cylinder dream this is!"

"Your alliterative encomia," the Saint murmured, "leave me as awed as your inference. Don't you think you'd better give out with this—er—bedtime story? Before that unholy pair return with gunlined question marks?"

CHAPTER II

Comes the Dawn

THE strange man rubbed his eyes in a dazed helpless way.

"I don't know where to begin," he said conventionally.

But after a while, haltingly, he tried.

Andrew Faulks, in the normal course of events, weathered the slingshots and arrows of outrageous playmates and grew up to be a man.

As men will, he fixed his heart and eyes on a girl and eventually married her. As women will, she gave birth in due course to a boy, Andy Jr., and later a girl, Alexandria.

He became a bank clerk and went to and from home on an immutable schedule. He got an occasional raise; he was bawled out at times by the head teller; he became a company man, a white collar worker and developed all the political ills that whitecollared flesh is heir to.

And he dreamed—literally.

This was what Big Bill Holbrook told the Saint in the mountain cabin to which Simon

had retired to await the blowing over of a rather embarrassing situation which involved items duly registered on police records.

"In the first dream I was coming out of this hotel, see. And whammo! Bumping into her woke me— Oh, the heck with it. Whoever was dreaming woke up but it was me bumped into her. And I was sorry as heck, because, brother, she was something."

Some two weeks later, Big Bill said, he bumped into her again. The dream started exactly as its predecessor, progressed exactly to the point of collision.

"But I didn't awaken this time. We each apologized all over the place and somehow we were walking along together. Just as I was about to ask her to have dinner I woke up again."

"Or Andy did," the Saint supplied.

"Yeah. Whoever. Now this is what happened. Every ten days or two weeks I'd be back in this dream, starting out of the hotel, crashing into her, walking along, having dinner, getting to know her better each dream.

"Each one started exactly the same, but each one went a little further into her life. It was like reading the same book over and over, always starting back at the beginning but getting one chapter further every time.

"I got so used to it that I'd say to myself, 'This is where I woke up last time,' and then, after the dream had gone on a bit further, I'd begin to think, 'Well, I guess this must be getting near the end of another installment,' and sure enough about that time I'd wake up again."

The accidental encounter began to develop sinister ramifications, picked up unsavory characters and put Big Bill Holbrook in the role of a Robin Hood.

"Or a Saint," he amended, "rescuing a beautiful dame from a bunch of lugs."

And there was, of course, the jewel.

It had a history. The fire opal, which seemed to be eternal yet living beauty, had carved upon it the likeness of Dawn's great-great-grandmother, of whom the girl was the living image.

The talented Oriental craftsman who had chiseled those features which were the essence of beauty—that wily fellow had breathed upon the cameo gem a curse.

The curse—it must not get out of the possession of the family, or else.

Death, deprivation and a myriad other unpleasantnesses were predicted if the stone fell

into alien hands.

The name of Selden Appopoulis slithered into the tale. This was a fat man, a lecherous fat man, a greedy fat man, who wanted—not loved—Dawn; and who wanted—and loved—the cameo opal. In some fashion that was not exactly clear to the Saint the fat man was in a position to put a financial squeeze on her.

IN EACH succeeding dream of Andrew Faulks, Glendale bank clerk, Dawn's position became more and more untenable. In desperation she finally agreed to turn the jewel over to Appopoulis. The fat man sent for the jewel by the two henchmen whom the Saint had directed off into the Holbrook-bare woods.

"Now in this dream—this here *now* dream," Holbrook said, "I took it away from him, see? Andy Faulks went to sleep in Glendale Saturday night and—say, what day is it now?"

"Tuesday."

"Yeah, that's the way it seems to me too. And that's funny. If you're really part of this dream you'd naturally think it was Tuesday, because your time and my time would be the same. But you don't seem like part of a dream. I pinched you and—oh nuts, I'm all mixed up."

"Let's try and be clear about this," said the Saint patiently. "You know that it's Tuesday here but you think you're dreaming all this in Glendale on Saturday night."

"I don't know," said the other wearily. "You see, I never dreamed more than one day at a stretch before. But tonight it's been going on and on. It's gone way past the time when I ought to have woken up. But I don't seem to be able to wake up."

"I've tried. . . . Suppose I don't wake up! Suppose I never can wake up? Suppose I never can get back and I have to go on and on with this, being Big Bill Holbrook. . . ."

"You could take a trip to Glendale," Simon suggested gravely, "and try waking Faulks up."

Holbrook-Faulks stared at him with oddly unfocussed eyes.

"I can't," he said huskily. "I thought of that—once. But I couldn't make myself do it. I—I'm scared . . . of what I might find. . . . Suppose. . . ."

He broke off, his pupils dilated with the formless horror of a glimpse of something that no mind could conceive.

Simon roused him again, gently. "So you

took the jewel. . . ."

Holbrook snapped out of his reverie.

"Yeah, and I lammed out for this cabin. Dawn was supposed to meet me here. But I guess I can't control all these characters. Say," he asked suddenly, "who do you suppose I am? Faulks or Holbrook?"

"I suggest you ask your mother, old boy."

"This ain't funny. I mean, who do you *really* suppose I am? Andy Faulks is asleep and dreaming me but I've got all his memories, so am I a projection of Andy or am I me and him both? None of these other characters have any more memories than they need."

Simon wondered if the two men chasing Holbrook were his keepers—he could use a few. In fact, Simon reflected, keepers would fit into the life of Holbrook-Faulks like thread in a needle. But he sipped his freshly poured brandy and urged the man to continue.

"Well, something's happened," Holbrook-Faulks said. "It never was like this before. I never could smell things before. I never could really feel them. You know how it is in a dream. But now it seems like as if you stuck a knife in me I'd bleed real blood. You don't suppose a—a reiterated dream could become reality?"

"I," said the Saint, "am a rank amateur in that department."

"Well, I was too—or Andy was, whichever of us is me—but I read everything I could get my hands on about dreams—or Andy did—and it didn't help a bit."

Most men wouldn't have heard the faint faroff stirring in the forest. But the Saint's ears, attuned by long practise to detect sound that differed from what should be there, picked up evidence of movement toward the cabin.

"Some one," he said suddenly, "and I mean one, is coming. Not your pursuers—it's from the opposite direction."

Holbrook-Faulks listened.

"I don't hear anything."

"I didn't expect you to—yet. Now that it's dark, perhaps you'd better slip outside, brother, and wait. I don't pretend to believe your yarn but that some game is afoot is so obvious that even Sherlock Holmes could detect it. I suggest that we prepare for eventualities."

The eventuality that presently manifested itself was a girl. And it was a girl who could have been no one but Dawn Winter.

SHE came wearily into the cabin, disheveled, her dress torn provocatively so that sunbrowned flesh showed through, her cloud of golden hair swirled in fairy patterns, her dark eyes brooding, her mouth a parted dream.

The Saint caught his breath and began to wonder whether he could really make Big Bill Holbrook wake up and vanish.

"Do you belong to the coffee and/or brandy school of thought?" he asked.

"Please." She fell carelessly into a chair, and the Saint coined a word.

She was gamorous beyond belief.

"Miss Winter, pull down your dress or I'll never get this drink poured. You've turned me into an aspen. You're the most beautiful hunk of flesh I've ever seen. Have your drink and go, please."

She looked at him then and took in the steel-cable leanness of him, the height of him, the crisp black hair, the debonair blue eyes. She smiled and a brazen gong tolled in the Saint's head.

"Must I?" she said.

Her voice caught at the core of desire and tangled itself forever there.

"Set me some task," the Saint said uncertainly. "Name me a mountain to build, a continent to sink, a star to fetch you in the morning."

The cabin door crashed open. The spell splintered into shining shards. Holbrook-Faulks stood stony-faced against the door.

"Hello, Bill," the girl said, her eyes still on the Saint. "I came, you see."

Bill's gaze was an unwavering lance with the Saint pinioned on its blazing tip.

"Am I gonna have trouble with you, too, Saint?"

The Saint opened his mouth to answer and stiffened as another sound reached his ears. Jockey and weightlifter were returning.

"We'll postpone any jousting over the fair lady for the moment," Simon said. "We're about to have more company."

Holbrook stared wildly around.

"Come on, Dawn. Out the window. They'll kill us."

Many times before in his checkered career the Saint had had to make decisions in a fragment of time—when a gun was leveled and a finger whitening on the trigger, when a traffic accident roared toward consumption, when a ship was sinking, when a knife flashed through candlelight.

His decision now was compounded of several factors, none of which was the desire for self-preservation. The Saint rarely gave thought-room to self-preservation—never when there was something more important to preserve.

He did not want this creature of tattered loveliness, this epitome of what men live for, to get out of his sight. He must therefore keep her inside the cabin. And there was no place to hide. . . .

His eyes narrowed as he looked at the two bunks. He was tearing out the mattresses before his thought was fully formed. He tossed the mattresses in a corner where shadows had retreated from the candle on the table. Then he motioned to Holbrook.

"Climb up. Make like a mattress."

He boosted the big man into the top bunk and his hands were like striking brown snakes as he packed blankets around him and remade the bed so that it only looked untidily put together.

"Now you," he said to the girl.

She got into the lower bunk and lay flat on her back, her disturbing head in the far corner. The Saint deposited a swift kiss upon her full red lips. They were cool and soft and the Saint was adrift for a second.

Then he covered her. He emptied a box of pine cones on the mattresses and arranged the whole to appear as a corner heap of cones.

He was busy cleaning the dishes when the pounding came on the door.

CHAPTER III

Hands on the Opal

AS HE examined the pair, Simon Templar was struck by the fact that these men were types, such types as B pictures had imprinted upon the consciousness of the world.

The small one could be a jockey, one with whom you could make a deal. For a consideration, he would pull a horse in the stretch or slip a Mickey into a rival rider's sarsaparilla. In the dim light that fanned out from the door, his eyes were small and ratlike, his mouth a slit of cynicism, his nose a quivering button of greed.

His heavier companion was a different but equally familiar type. This man was Butch

to a T. He was large, placid, oafish and an order taker. His not to reason why, his but to do—or cry. He'd be terribly hurt if he failed to do what he was ordered. He'd apologize, he'd curse himself.

It crossed the Saint's mind that a bank clerk such as Andrew Faulks had been described would dream such characters.

"So you lied to us," the little man snarled.

The Saint arched an eyebrow. At the same time he reached out and twisted the little man's nose as if he were trying to unscrew it.

"When you address me, Oswald, say 'Sir'."

The little man sprang back in outraged fury. He clapped one hand to his injured proboscis, now turning a deeper purple than the night. The other hand slid under his coat.

Simon waited until he had the gun out of the holster, then leaped the intervening six feet and twisted it from the little man's hand. The Saint let the gun swing from his finger by its trigger guard.

"Take him, Mac!" grated the disarmed man.

Mac vented a kind of low growl, but did nothing but fidget as the Saint turned curious blue eyes on him. The tableau hung frozen for a long moment before the little man shattered the silence.

"Well? Ya afraid of 'im?"

"Yup," Mac said unhappily. "Criminy, Jimmy, 'f he c'n get the best of uh you, well, criminy, Jimmy."

Jimmy moaned. "You mean you're gonna stand there and let just one guy take my gun away from me? Cripes, he ain't a army."

"No," Mac agreed, growing more unhappy by the second, "but he kind of seems like one, Jimmy. Didja see that jump? Criminy, Jimmy."

The Saint decided to break it up.

"Now, Oswald—"

"Dinn'ja hear Mac? Name's Jimmy."

"Oswald," the Saint said firmly, "is how I hold you in my heart. Now, Oswald, perhaps you'll pour oil on these troubled waters, before I take you limb from muscle and throw you away."

"We don't want no trouble," Jimmy said. "We want Big Bill. You got him, but we got to take him back with us."

"And who is Big Bill and why do you want him and why do you think I have him?"

"We know you got him," Jimmy said. "This here's Trailer Mac."

The Saint nodded at Mac.

"Charmed, I'm sure."

"Hey, Jimmy," Mac broke in, "this guy's a phoney."

Jimmy blinked.

"Owls," Mac explained, "can't swim."

"What the damblasted hades has owls to do with it?" Jimmy demanded.

"He said pour owls on the something waters. So that," Mac said in triumph, "proves it."

This, the Saint thought, wanders. He restrained Jimmy from assulting Mac and returned to the subject.

"Why should the revelation of this gent's identity be regarded as even an intimation that I have—what was the name?—Big Bill?"

"Holbrook," Jimmy said. "Why, this is Trailer Mac. Ain't you never heard of him? He follered Loopie Louie for eighteen years and finally caught 'im in the middle of Lake Erie."

"I never heard of him," Simon said and smiled at Mac's hurt look. "But then, there are lots of people I've never heard of."

THIS, he thought as he said it, was hardly true. He had filed away in the indexes of his amazing memory the dossiers of almost every crook in history. He was certain that he'd have heard of such a chase if it had ever occurred.

"Anyway," Jimmy went on, "we didn't go more'n a coupla miles till Mac he says Big Bill ain't here, 'n he ain't been here, neither. Well, he come this far, 'n he didn't go no farther. So you got him. He's inside."

"The cumulative logic in that series of statements is devastating," the Saint said. "But logicians veer. History will bear me out. Aristotle was a shining example. Likewise all the boys who gave verisimilitude to idiocy by substituting syllogisms for thought processes, who evaded reality by using unsemantic verbalisms for fact-finding and, heaven save the mark, fact finding."

Mac appealed to the superior intellect in his crowd.

"Whut'n heck's he talkin' about, Jimmy?"

"I mean," the Saint said, "Big Bill ain't here. Come in and case the joint."

"Whyn't cha say so?" Mac snarled, and pushed inside.

They searched nook and cranny and Mac fingered a knothole hopefully once. They gave the bunk beds a passing glance, and were incurious about the seeming pile of

pine cones in the corner. Mac boosted Jimmy up on the big central beam to peer into ceiling shadows, and they scanned the fireplace chimney.

Then they stood and looked at the Saint with resentment.

"Sump'n's fishy," Jimmy pronounced. "He's got to be here. This here"—he pointed—"is Trailer Mac."

"Maybe we better go get the boss, huh, Jimmy?"

"Yeah," Jimmy agreed. "He'll find Big Bill."

"Who," the Saint inquired, "is the boss?"

"You'll see," Jimmy promised. "He won't be scared of you. He's just down the hill in town. Stopped off to play a game of billiards. So we'll be seein' ya, bub."

They went off into the night and the Saint stood quite still for a moment in a little cloud of perplexity.

Never before had he been faced with a situation that was so full of holes.

He added up known data—a man who had a fabulous jewel, who claimed to be the projected dream of his alter ego; a girl of incredible beauty said to be another creation of that dream; and two characters who were after the man and/or the jewel and/or—perhaps—the girl.

Mac and Jimmy had searched the cabin. They professed to have overlooked an object the size of Big Bill Holbrook. Their proof that they had overlooked him—"This here's Trailer Mac." They assumed he would remain here while they walked four miles to the settlement and back with their boss, who was said to have stopped off to shoot a game of billiards.

But would a man on the trail of that fire opal stop off to play billiards? Would two pseudo-tough guys go away and leave their quarry unguarded?

No, the Saint decided. These were the observable facts but they were unimportant. They masked a larger, more sinister pattern. Great forces must be underlying the surface trivia. Undeniably, the jewel was a thing to drive men to madness. It could motivate historical bloodshed. The girl, too, possessing the carven features of the gem, could drive men to—anything.

But for the life of him the Saint could not get beneath the surface pattern to what must be the real issues. He could only cling to the conviction that they had to exist and that they must be deadly.

He turned back to the bunk beds.

"Come on out, kids," he said. "The big bad wolves have temporarily woofed away."

Fear lingered in the dark depths of Dawn Winter's eyes, making her even more hauntingly beautiful. The Saint found strange words forming on his lips, as if some other being possessed them.

He seemed to be saying, "Dawn . . . I've seen the likeness of every beauty in history or imagination. Every one of them would be a drab shadow beside you. You are so beautiful that the world would bow down and worship you—if the world knew of your existence.

"Yet it's impossible that the world doesn't know. If one single person looked at you, the word would go out. Cameramen would beat a path to your door, artists would dust off their palettes, agents would clamor with contracts. But somehow this hasn't happened. Why? Where, to be trite, have you been all my life?"

HE couldn't define the expression which now entered her eyes. It might have been bewilderment, or worry, or fear, or an admixture.

"I—I. . . ." She put a hand as graceful as a calla lily against her forehead. "I— don't know."

"Oh, don't let's carry this too far." It sounded more like himself again. "Where were you born, where did you go to school, who are your parents?"

She worried at him with wide, dark eyes.

"That's just the trouble. I—don't remember any childhood. I remember only my great-great-grandmother. I never saw her, of course, but she's the only family I know about."

Big Bill's facial contortions finally caught the Saint's eye. They were something to watch. His mouth worked like a corkscrew, his eyebrows did a can-can.

"I gather," said the Saint mildly, "that you are giving me the hush-hush. I'm sorry, comrade, but I'm curious. Suppose you put in your two cents."

"I told you once," Big Bill said. "I told you the truth."

"Pish," Simon said. "Also, tush."

"It's true," Big Bill insisted. "I wouldn't lie to the Saint."

The girl echoed this in a voice of awe.

"The Saint? The Robin Hood of modern crime, the twentieth century's brightest

buccaneer, the—" she blushed—"the demon with dames."

It occurred to Simon, with a shock of remembrance, that her phrases were exactly those of Big Bill's when he learned his host's identity. And even then they had been far from new. The Saint thought of this for a moment and rejected what it suggested. He shook his head.

"Let's consider that fire opal then, children. It's slightly fabulous, you know. Now, I don't think anybody knows more than I do about famous jools. Besides such well-known items as the Cullinan and the Hope diamonds, I am familiar with the history of almost every noteworthy bauble that was ever dug up.

"There's the Waters diamond, for example. No more than a half dozen persons know of its existence, its perfect golden flawless color. And the Chiang emerald, that great and beautiful stone that has been seen by only three living people, myself included.

"But this cameo opal is the warp of history. It couldn't be hidden for three generations without word of it getting out. In the course of time, I couldn't have helped hearing about it. But I didn't . . . So it doesn't exist. But it does. I know it exists. I've held it in my hand—"

"And put in your pocket," Big Bill said.

The Saint felt in his jacket.

"So I did." He pulled out the chamois bag with its precious contents and made as if to toss it. "Here."

Big Bill stopped him with flared hands.

"Please keep it for me, Mr. Templar. Things will get rather bad around here soon. I don't want Appopoulis to get his fat hands on it."

"Soon? Surely not for a couple of hours."

Big Bill frowned.

"Things happen so quickly in dreams. This may *seem* real, but it'll still hold the screwy pattern you'd expect."

The Saint made a gesture of annoyance.

"Still sticking to your story? Well, maybe you're screwy or maybe you just think I am. But I'd rather face facts. As a matter of fact, I insist on it." He turned back to the girl. "For instance, darling, I know that you exist. I've kissed you."

BIG Bill growled, glared but did nothing as the Saint waited calmly.

Simon continued, "I have the evidence of my hands, lips and eyes that you have all

the common things in common with other women. In addition you have this incredible, unbelievable loveliness. When I look at you I find it hard to believe that you're real. But that's only a figure of speech. My senses convince me. Yet you say you don't remember certain things that all people remember. Why?"

She repeated her gesture of confusion.

"I—don't know. I can't remember any past."

"It would be a great privilege and a rare pleasure," the Saint said gently, "to provide you with a past to remember."

Another low growl rumbled in Big Bill's chest and the Saint waited again for developments. None came and it struck the Saint that all the characters in this muddled melodrama had one characteristic in common—a certain cowardice in the clutch.

Even Dawn Winter showed signs of fear, and nobody had yet made a move to harm her. It was only another of the preposterous paradoxes that blended into the indefinable unreality of the whole.

Simon gave it up. If he couldn't get what he thought was truth from either of these two he could watch and wait and divine the truth. Conflict hung on the wind and conflict drags truth out of her hiding place and casts her naked before watching eyes.

"Well, souls," he said. "What now? The unholy three will be back sometime. You could go now. There is the wide black night to wander in."

"No," Big Bill said. "Now that you're in this, give us your help, Saint. We need you."

"Just what, then," Simon asked, "are we trying to prevent or accomplish?"

"Selden Appopoulis must not get his hands on the opal or Dawn. He wants both. He'll stop at nothing to get them."

"I believe you mentioned a curse breathed on this gewgaw by some Oriental character."

Dawn Winter's voice once more tangled itself in Simon's heart. As long as he could remember that quality—of faroff bells at dusk, of cellos on a midnight hill—time would never again pass slowly enough.

"Death shall swoop on him," she chanted, "who holds this ancient gem from its true possessor, but all manner of things shall plague him before that dark dread angel shall come to rest at his shoulder. His nights shall be sleepless with terror and hurts shall dog his accursed steps by day. Beauty shall bring an end to the vandal."

CHAPTER IV

The Nonplussed Saint

THE mood of her strange incantation, far more than the actual words, seemed to linger on the air after she had finished, so that in spite of all rationality the Saint felt spectral fingers on his spine. He shook off the spell with conscious resolution.

"It sounds very impressive," he murmured, "in a gruesome sort of way. Reminds me of one of those Zombie pictures. But where, may I ask, does this place me in the scheme of dire events? I have the jewel."

"You," Big Bill Holbrook said, "will die, as I must, and as Trailer Mac and Jimmy must. They stole it from Dawn. I stole it from them."

The Saint smiled.

"Well, if that's settled, let's pass on to more entertaining subjects bordering on the carnal. Miss Winter, my car is just down the hill. If Bill is resigned to his fate, suppose we leave him and his playmates to their own fantastic devices and drift off into the night."

Her face haloed with pleasure.

"I'd like it," she said. "But I—I just can't."

"Why not? You're over three years old. Nobody is sitting on your chest."

"I can't do what I like, somehow," she said. "I can only do what I must. It's always that way."

"This," the Saint said to nobody in particular, "sounds like one of those stories that fellow Charteris might write. And what's the matter with you?" he demanded of Holbrook. "A little earlier you were eager to get banged about because I admired the lady. Now you sit with disgusting indifference to my indecent proposal. I assure you it was indecent from your viewpoint."

Big Bill grinned.

"It just occurred to me. She can't go with you. She must do what she must. She can't get out of my sight. Good old Andy," he added.

The Saint turned his eyes away and stared into space, wondering. His wandering gaze focused on a small wall mirror that reflected Dawn Winter. Her features were blurred, run together, an amorphous mass. Simon wondered what could have happened to that mirror.

He swung back to face Bill Holbrook.

"I'm afraid," he said softly but with the iron will showing through his velvet tones, "that we must have some truth in our little seance. Like the walrus, I feel the time has come to speak of many things. From this moment, you are my prisoners. The length of your durance vile depends on you. Who are you, Miss Winter?"

The look she turned on him made his hands tingle. Her's was a face for cupping between tender palms. Dark and troubled, her eyes pleaded for understanding, for sympathy.

"I told you all I know," she pleaded. "I've tried and tried, ever since I could remember anything, to think of—well, all those things you think of at times."

A GAIN she passed a hand across her face, as if wiping away veils.

"I don't ever remember snagging a stocking on my way to an important appointment," she said. "And I know that girls do. I never had to fight for my"—she colored—"my honor, whatever that is."

"And I know that girls like me have fought for this something I don't understand, by the time they've reached my age. Whatever that is," she added pensively. "I don't even know how old I am, or where I've been."

A pattern suddenly clicked into place in the Saint's brain, a pattern so monstrous, so inhuman as to arouse his destructive instincts to the point of homicidal mania. The look he turned on Big Bill Holbrook was ice and flame.

His voice was pitched at conversational level, but each word fell from his lips like a shining sword.

"Do you know," he said, "I'm beginning to get some new ideas. Not very nice ideas, chum. And if I'm guessing right about what you and your fellow scum have done to this innocent girl you are liable to cost your insurance company money."

He moved toward Holbrook with a liquid grace that had all the coordination of a panther's movement—and the menace. Big Bill Holbrook leaned back from it.

"Stop acting the knight in armor," he protested. "What are you talking about?"

"It should have been obvious before," Simon Templar said. "Up on your feet, Holbrook."

Holbrook remained at ease.

"If you've got an explanation for all this

that doesn't agree with mine I want to know it."

The Saint paused. There was honest curiosity in the man's voice—no fear. That cowardice which had characterized him before was replaced with what seemed an honest desire to hear the Saint's idea.

"This girl," the Saint said, "whoever she is, has breeding, grace and beauty out of this world. She has been brought up amid expensive and sheltered surroundings. You can see that in her every gesture, every expression. She was bred to great wealth, perhaps nobility, even royalty."

Big Bill leaned forward in almost an agony of concentration. Every word of Simon Templar's might have been a twenty-dollar gold piece, the way he reached for it with every sense.

The Saint patted his jacket pocket.

"This jewel is the symbol of her position—heiress, princess, queen or what have you. You and your unsavory companions kidnapped her and are holding her for ransom. That would be wicked enough but you've done worse.

"Somewhere in the course of your nasty little scheme it seemed like a good idea to destroy a part of her beauty that could be dangerous to you and your precious pals. So you destroyed her mind. With drugs, I have no doubt—drugs that have dulled her mind until she has no memory.

"Your reasons are clear enough—it was just a sound form of insurance. And now your gang has split up, fighting over the spoils. I don't know who would have come out on top, if you hadn't happened to run into me. But I know what the end is going to be now—and you aren't going to like it. Get on your feet!"

The command was like a pistol shot and Big Bill Holbrook jumped. Then he leaned back again and chuckled in admiration.

"Everything that's been said about you is true. There's nobody like you. That's so much better than Andy Faulks did there's no comparison. Say, that really would have been something and look, it'd have explained why she couldn't remember who she was. Saint, I got to hand it to you. Too bad you're not in bed in Glendale."

FOR one of a very few times in his life the Saint was taken aback. The words were spoken with such ease, such sincerity, that Simon's deadly purpose cooled to a feel-

ing of confusion. Somewhere the sequence of logic had written a false corollary diametrically opposed to the pattern.

While it is true that a man who is accustomed to danger, to gambling for high stakes with death as a forfeit could simulate feelings he did not actually feel, it is seldom that a man of Big Bill Holbrook's obvious I.Q. can look annihilation in the face with an admiring grin.

Something was still wrong, wrong in the same way that everything in the whole episode was wrong—wrong with that same unearthly off-key distortion that defeated logical diagnosis.

The Saint took out a cigarette and lighted it slowly—and over the hiss of the match he heard other sounds, which resolved themselves into a blur of footsteps advancing on the cabin.

Simon glanced at his watch. Jimmy and Mac had been gone less than half an hour. It was impossible for them to be returning from the village four miles away.

What had Holbrook said? Something about everything happening faster in dreams? But that was in the same vein of nonsense. Maybe they'd met the boss at the foot of the hill.

Holbrook said, "What is it? Did you hear something?"

"Only your friends again."

Fear came once more to Holbrook and Dawn Winter. Their eyes were wide and dark with it, turning instantly toward the bunk beds.

"No," Simon said. "Not this time. We'll have this out in the open."

"But he'll kill us!" Holbrook began to babble. "It's awful, the things he'll do. You don't know him, Saint. You can't imagine, you couldn't—"

"I can imagine anything," said the Saint coldly. "I've been doing that for some time, and I'm tired of it. Now I'd prefer to know."

He crossed the room as the footsteps outside turned into knuckles at the door. Templar jerked the door inward.

"Welcome to our study club," the Saint said.

Trailer Mac and Jimmy preceded an enormous hulk through the door and, when they saw Holbrook and Dawn, charged like lions leaping on paralyzed gazelles in some primeval jungle clearing.

The Saint moved in a lightning blur. Two sharp cracks of fist on flesh piled Mac in one corner, Jimmy in another. They lay still.

CHAPTER V

The Empty Pocket

A BUTTERY chuckle caused the Saint to turn. He was looking into a small circular hole. A .38, he computed. He raised his eyes to twins of the barrel but these were eyes. They lay deep in flesh that swelled in yellowish brown rolls, flowing fatly downward to describe one of the fattest men the Saint had ever seen. They could only have belonged to a man called Selden Appopoulis.

"Mr. Sydney Greenstreet, I presume?" Simon drawled.

The buttery chuckle set a sea of flesh ebbing and flowing.

"A quick action, sir, and an efficient direction of action. I compliment you and am saddened that you must die."

The Saint shrugged. He knew that this fat man, though butter-voiced, had a heart of iridium. His eyes were the pale expressionless orbs of a killer. His mouth was thin with determination, his hand steady with purpose. But Simon had faced all those indications before.

"I hate to disappoint you, comrade," he said lightly, "but that line has a familiar ring. And yet I'm still alive."

Appopoulis appraised and dismissed the Saint, though his eyes never wavered. He spoke to Holbrook.

"The opal. *Quickly!*"

The butter of his voice had frozen into oleaginous icicles—and Holbrook quailed under the bite of their sharp edges.

"I haven't got it, Appopoulis. The Saint has it."

Simon was astonished at the change in the fat man. It was subtle, admittedly but it was there none the less. Fear came into the pale gray eyes which had been calmly contemplating murder as a climax to unspeakable inquisitions. Fear and respect. The voice melted butter again.

"So," he said warmly. "Simon Templar, the Robin Hood of modern crime, the twentieth century's brightest buccaneer, the—ah—demon with dames. I had not anticipated this."

Once more it struck the Saint that the descriptive phrases were an exact repetition

of Holbrook's. And once more it struck him that the quality of fear in this weird quintet was not strained. And once more he wondered about Holbrook's fantastic tale. . . .

"You are expecting maybe Little Lord Feigenbaum?" Simon asked. "Or what do you want?"

"The cameo opal for one thing," Appopoulis said easily. "For the other the girl."

"And what do you intend to do with them?"

"Cherish them, sir. Both of them."

His voice had encyclopedic lust and greed and the Saint felt as if small things crawled on him.

Before he could make an answer, stirrings in their respective corners announced the return of Mac and Jimmy to another common plane of existence. Without a word they got groggily to their feet, shook their heads clear of triphammers and moved toward the Saint.

"Now, Mr. Templar," said Appopoulis, "you have a choice. Live and my desires are granted without violence, die and they are spiced with emotions at fever heat."

Mac and Jimmy had halted—one small and thunderstruck, one large and paralyzed.

"Boss," quavered Jimmy, "did youse say Templar? Da Saint?"

"The same." Simon bowed.

"Chee!" Mac breathed. "Da Saint. Da Robin Hood of modern crime, da—"

"Please," Simon groaned. "Another record, if you don't mind."

"Boss, we ain't got a chanct," Jimmy said. Appopoulis turned his eyes on the little man.

"He," the boss said, "has the opal."

This news stiffened their gelatinous spines long enough to set them at the Saint in a two-directional charge.

The Saint swerved to meet it. He held Jimmy between himself and the unwavering gun of Appopoulis with one hand. With the other he wrought havoc on the features of Mac.

It was like dancing, like feathers on the breeze, the way the Saint moved. Even to himself it had the kind of exhilaration that a fighter may only experience once in the lifetime. He had a sense of power, of supernatural coordination, of invincibility beyond anything he had ever known.

He cared nothing for the knowledge that Appopoulis was skipping around on the outskirts of the fray, trying to find an angle

from which he could terminate it with a well-placed shot.

Simon knew that it was no fear of killing Jimmy that stayed the fat man's finger on the trigger—it was simply the knowledge that it would have wasted a shot, that the Saint could have gone on using Jimmy as a shield, alive or dead. The Saint knew this coolly and detachedly, as if with a mind separate from his own, while he battered Mac's face into a vari-colored pulp.

Then Mac's eyes glazed and he went down—and the Saint's right hand snaked hipwards for his own gun while his left flung Jimmy bodily at the paunch of Appopoulis.

And that was when the amazing, the incredible, the impossible thing, went wrong. For Jimmy didn't fly away from the Saint's thrust, as he should have, like a marble from a slingshot. Somehow he remained entangled with the Saint's arm, clinging to it as it bogged in some indissoluble birdlime with a writhing tenacity that was as inescapable as a nightmare.

And Simon looked down the barrel of Appopoulis's gun and saw the fat man's piggy eyes brighten with something that might have been lust.

The Saint tried to throw a shot at him, but he was off balance and the frenzied squirming of his erstwhile shield made it like trying to shoot from the back of a bucking horse. The bullet missed by a fraction of an inch and buried itself in the wall beside the mirror. Then Appopoulis fired back.

The Saint felt a jar and a flame roared inside his chest. Somehow, he couldn't pull the trigger any more. The gun fell from his limp fingers. His incredulous eyes looked full in the mirror and saw a neat black hole over his heart, saw it begin to spread as his life's blood gushed out.

It was strange to realize that this was it, that it had happened to him at last, as it had always been destined to happen some day, and in an instant he was going to cheat to the back of the book for the answer to the greatest mystery of all.

Yet his last conscious thought was that his image was sharp and clear in the mirror. When he had seen Dawn's reflection, it had been like one seen in an agitated pool. . . .

WHEN he opened his eyes again it was broad daylight and the intensity of the light indicated it must have been more than twelve hours since he had been shot.

He was lying on the floor of the cabin. He felt for his heart. It was beating strongly. His hand did not come away sticky with blood.

His eyes turned hesitantly down to his shirt. There was no hole in it. He jumped to his feet, felt himself all over, examined himself in the mirror. He was as whole as he'd ever been—and he felt fine.

He looked around the cabin. The mattresses were piled in the corner under the pine cones, the bunks unmade. Otherwise there were no signs of the brawl the night before. No trace of Jimmy and Mac, or Appopoulis. No Big Bill Holbrook. No Dawn. . . .

And no hole in the wall beside the mirror where his hopeless shot at Appopoulis had buried itself.

The Saint shook his head. If it had all been a dream he might have to consider seriously consulting a psychiatrist. Dreams reach only a certain point of vividness. What he remembered was too sharp of definition, too coherent, too consecutive. Yet if it wasn't a dream where were the evidences of reality, the bullet hole in his chest, in the wall?

He went to the door. There should be footprints. His cabin had rated with Grand Central station for traffic last night.

There were no footprints other than his own.

Simon reached for a cigarette and sniffed it suspiciously before he put it in his mouth. If some joker, either in fun or malice, had adulterated his tobacco with some more exotic herb . . . but that too was absurd. A jag of those dimensions would surely bequeath a hangover to match—and his head was as clear as the mountain air.

He fumbled in his pockets for a match. Instead, his questing fingers touched something solid, a shape that was oddly familiar—yet impossibly alien. The tactile sensation lasted only for an instant, before his hand recoiled as if the thing had been red hot. He was afraid, actually afraid, to take it out.

ANDREW FAULKS' address was in the Glendale directory. The house was a

modest two-bedroom affair on a side street near Forest Lawn Memorial Park. A wreath hung on the door. A solemn gentleman who looked like, and undoubtedly was, an undertaker, opened the door. He looked like Death rubbing white hands together.

"Mr. Faulks passed on last night," he said in answer to the Saint's query. Unctuous sorrow overlaid the immediate landscape.

"Wasn't it rather sudden?"

"Ah, not exactly, sir. He went to sleep last Saturday, passed into a coma and never awakened."

"At what time," Simon asked, "did he die?"

"At ten-forty," the man replied. "It was a sad death. He was in a delirium. He kept shouting about shooting someone, and talked about a saint."

Simon had moved into the house while listening to the tale of death and found himself looking off the hallway into a well-lighted den.

His keen eyes noted that, while most of the shelves were gay with the lurid jackets of adventure fiction, one section was devoted to works on psychology and psychiatry.

Here were the tomes of Freud, Adler, Jung, Brill, Bergson, Krafft-Ebing and lesser lights. A book lay open on a small reading table.

The Saint stepped inside the room to look at it. It was titled *In Darkest Schizophrenia* by William J. Holbrook, Ph. D.

Simon wondered what psychic phenomena boys would do with this one. This, he thought, would certainly give them a shot in the aura.

"Mrs. Faulks is upstairs, sir," the professional mourner was saying. "Are you a friend of the family? I'll be glad to ask whether she can see you."

"I wish you'd just show her this." Simon forced one hand into a pocket. "And ask her. . . ."

He never finished the question. Never.

There was nothing in the pocket for his hand to find. Nothing to meet his fingertips but a memory that was even then darkening and dying out along his nerves.

Next Issue's Headliners: THE POWER AND THE GLORY, an Astonishing Complete Novel by Henry Kuttner—THE TIMELESS TOMORROW, a Fantastic Novelet by Manly Wade Wellman—QUARANTINE, an Amazing Novelet by George O. Smith—and many others!



In a spasm of anger, Donaldson reached out and twisted a dial, sending a wave of agonizing current through Aucassir

PROBATE

By MARGARET ST. CLAIR

Scientist Jim Donaldson stages a last-ditch revolt against the emergence of the superior New Man as Earth's inheritor!

PROBATE—*n. Law.* Official proof, esp. of an instrument offered as the last will and testament of a person deceased.—*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.*

THEY were very beautiful, Jim Donaldson thought, pressing his hands over his eyes. (He had worked for twenty hours without sleep.) Aesthetically, Homo intelligens was a delight. The tall, strong, shapely body, the noble symmetry of

the head, the amazingly vivid coloration.

New Man, according to Old Man's standards, was the most beautiful thing that had ever walked the earth.

It didn't make any difference. He hated them. Sometimes he thought he had more in common with a lizard or a snake than with these incomprehensible strangers who had come as mutants from the loins of his kind.

Their alienness almost made his flesh creep.

Old Man in general had felt it so.

How many Old Men were there left now? He and Bax had been the only ones in all the New York area, and Bax was three months dead. He must remember to ask Aucassir, his adviser.

When Old Man had realized that his successor was on the scene, that his winter was upon him, he had begun a bloody, savage, pitiless struggle against the newcomer.

Old Man had warred against his heir with the black, unsleeping treachery of a Dobu islander, cruelty the weapon whose feel he relished most. There had been truce after truce, but *Homo sapiens* had broken them all.

At one time, so Aucassir said, there had been less than five hundred New Men left. Then they had rallied, realizing—for they were incorrigibly unwilling to inflict pain—that no partial solution was possible, and turned all their enormous intelligence to the devising of weapons. Within two months, Old Man had been hopelessly routed.

Today Donaldson's mind went back to a conversation he had had with Bax not long before the psychiatrist's death.

"You say there's basically no insurmountable reason why we couldn't learn to tolerate *Homo intelligens*," Donaldson had argued. "You say they have good motives and they can put them into effect. That's nonsense. We've been top species for so long that, if we once accepted their hegemony, we'd die of an inferiority complex."

DONALDSON'S argument drew a snort of contempt from Bax.

"You're the one that's talking nonsense," Bax had replied. "As so many people did, you think that feelings of inferiority, what you call an inferiority complex, have something to do with inferiority in fact. They haven't. In the days when I still had patients, I saw over and over again that the people who suffered most from a conviction of inferiority were those who were superior both in native endowment and in achievement. But their success was powerless to alleviate a purely subjective thing.

"Adults don't feel inferior because they can't live up to what their culture expects of them; they feel inferior because as children they couldn't measure up to their parents' expectations. It's a sign of mental health to be satisfied with what one is."

"But we can't accept such things!" Don-

aldson had protested.

"Oh, it might take a generation or two of conditioning. Not more, I think. Dogs live with men and don't feel inferior. Though we have some mental abilities they haven't, *Homo intelligens* is as far above us in intelligence as we are above dogs."

As far above us as we are above dogs, Donaldson thought. But they had their blind spots. He smiled faintly. They'd let him keep on with his work, had encouraged him, given him everything he asked for. Now what would happen?

There was a rap at the door. After a moment, Aucassir, his adviser, entered. She was a tall, lovely girl with the intense turquoise eyes and gleaming copper skin of her race. *Homo intelligens* was far more homogeneous than Donaldson's people had been.

"I thought I'd drop in and see how you were doing," she said smilingly. "I left Gervis outside on the terrace—you know how he wants to handle everything." Gervis was her son, showing, in this slow-developing species, at the age of four the lack of complete muscular control Donaldson would have expected in a much younger child. "I see you're still using lots of power. How's your work coming?"

Donaldson felt a stab of fear. Aucassir's people were highly telepathic. But he was safe enough; because she was far too polite to tune in on his thoughts unless he invited her.

"I hope to have something to show you one of these days," he said.

"Splendid! We were talking about you in my group last night. I expect great things of you." Aucassir had a lovely voice.

He walked over to the windows and looked out over the window ledge to the city below.

"You haven't been around much lately, have you?" he said without turning.

Aucassir, as he had expected she would, looked vaguely puzzled.

"No. I—well—"

She had, he perceived with smug pleasure, no idea why she had called on him less frequently of late. The apparatus he had been working on broadcast vibrations, wave-particles (he could work on the nomenclature later), call them what you will, which rode pick-a-back on ordinary radio waves. Their effect on the sensitive neural organization of Aucassir's people was somewhat analogous to that of supersonics on Old Man. Aucassir avoided his laboratory without realizing why.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "What's that you're reading?"

"One of your old poets. You're much better at word-verse than we are."

He held out his hand for the book, and then realized, with a slow flush, that he couldn't read it. It was in a language he didn't know.

"It's Greek," Aucassir said helpfully. "I learned it last week. Some of it is very fine. Listen."

She found a place and began to read, long, rolling lines.

"What does it mean?" Donaldson asked, raging inwardly. It was intolerable to have his own culture ladled out to him by Aucassir, intolerable that New Man, who wasn't human, should be quicker at human things than Old Man had been.

AUCASSIR became contrite.

"Oh, you don't understand!" she cried. "I'm sorry. Your languages are hard to translate. Something like this: 'There are many strange things, but than Man, none stranger. He it is who goes across the gray sea with the wind of winter, and pierces through the swollen waves that follow one on another; and Earth, the eldest of the Gods, the unworn, the unwearied, he harasses with the turning plow, year after year, tilling the soil with the horse.' And this part is nice: 'And speech, and wind-swift thought, and the temper that shapes the state Man has found out for himself and—'"

"You say it's Greek?" Donaldson interrupted. He felt he couldn't bear to listen to her any longer. He had backed around so his hand was against the intensity-dial. It might, he thought unexpectedly, be a good idea to have a full-dress rehearsal of what his apparatus would do.

"Yes." Aucassir closed the book and looked at him. "Those are the things your people did," she said slowly. "You tilled the soil, you crossed the sea, you invented speech and founded states. Your people never realized how grateful we were to you. We felt you were a race with great achievements and we were your heirs. We build on what your people built."

She was perfectly sincere, Donaldson saw. Gratitude! She was as much above him as a man is above a dog. In a spasm of anger, he twisted the dial.

"What is it!" said Aucassir. Her mouth wrenched away from her teeth. For a moment she looked frantic. Donaldson had the

impression that she was trying to move and could not. Then her body stiffened and her face grew blank.

Donaldson turned the power down low and regarded her sourly. Paralysis first, he supposed, and, at greater intensities, death. His heart was pounding wildly, but on the whole he was surprised and pleased to find he was so calm. What he had just done was the first hostile act of man toward New Man in more than forty years.

How many of them would he be able to kill? He had enormous power at his disposal and, in theory, he ought to be able to blanket the earth. Even if theory were at fault, he'd be able to wipe out most of the New Men. It was too bad he hadn't remembered to ask Aucassir how many Old Men there were now. They were still born occasionally, he knew. Once they got rid of their overlords, Homo sapiens would be able to take over again. New Man would be disorganized and dazed. Homo intelligens had never been able to believe that anyone meant him harm.

Even if Donaldson were wrong about that, and man—his kind of man—didn't make a come-back, what difference did it make? Homo intelligens had everything, and Homo sapiens had nothing by comparison. But he was still dangerous. He could still kill.

There was a noise at the window. Donaldson looked up quickly, his pulses beginning to pound.

Gervis, left on the terrace, had grown bored with solitude. A four-year-old adventurer, he had climbed up on the parapet and onto the window ledge outside the laboratory; now, balanced insecurely, he was leaning out, smiling and clapping his hands, toward the city below.

For a moment Donaldson's heart stood still. If the child were startled in any way, he would plunge over and out of sight, down, down—down—

Then Donaldson opened the window, clasped his hands about the boy's body, and drew him gently into the room just as the child's feet slipped over the edge. Donaldson put him down softly on the laboratory floor. Twisting the dial on his apparatus back to zero, Donaldson began to laugh.

Aucassir had not realized how narrow had been her escape.

"What happened to me?" she had asked, stretching, breaking into uncontrollable yawns. "I feel like I'd been asleep. I don't

(Concluded on page 110)



Uncle Les swooped down for his hat and made a face at the peresser

Exit THE PROFESSOR

By HENRY KUTTNER

The Kentucky Highbens were hillbillies with a difference, as an investigating scientist certainly comes to know!

WE HIGBENS are right exclusive. That peresser feller from the city might have known that, but he come bustin' in without an invite, and I don't figger he had call to complain afterward. In Kaintuck the polite thing is to stick to your own hill of beans and not come nosing round where you're not wanted.

Time we ran off the Haley boys with that

shotgun-gadget we rigged up—only we never could make out how it worked, somehow—that time, it all started because Rafe Haley come peeking and prying at the shed winder, trying to get a look at Little Sam. Then Rafe went round sayin' Little Sam had three haid's or something.

Can't believe a word them Haley boys say. Three haid's! It ain't natcheral, is it? Any-

how, Little Sam's only got two hoids, and never had no more since the day he was born.

So Maw and I rigged up that shotgun thing and peppered the Haley boys good. Like I said, we couldn't figger out afterward how it worked. We'd tacked on some dry cells and a lot of coils and wires and stuff and it punched holes in Rafe as neat as anything.

Coroner's verdict was that the Haley boys died real sudden, and Sheriff Abernathy come up and had a drink of corn with us and said for two cents he'd whale the tar outa me. I didn't pay no mind. Only some damyankee reporter musta got wind of it, because a while later a big fat serious-looking man come around and begun to ask questions.

Uncle Les was sittin' on the porch, with his hat over his face. "You better get the heck back to your circus, mister," he just said. "We had offers from old Barnum hisself and turned 'em down. Ain't that right, Saunk?"

"Sure is," I said. "I never trusted Phineas. Called Little Sam a freak, he did."

The big solemn-looking man, whose name was Perfesser Thomas Galbraith, looked at me. "How old are you, son?" he said.

"I ain't your son," I said. "And I don't know, nohow."

"You don't look over eighteen," he said, "big as you are. You couldn't have known Barnum."

"Sure I did. Don't go giving me the lie. I'll wham you."

"I'm not connected with any circus," Galbraith said. "I'm a biogeneticist."

We sure laughed at that. He got kinda mad and wanted to know what the joke was.

"There ain't no such word," Maw said. And at that point Little Sam started yelling, and Galbraith turned white as a goose-wing and shivered all over. He sort of fell down. When we picked him up, he wanted to know what had happened.

"That was Little Sam," I said. "Maw's gone in to comfort him. He's stopped now."

"That was a sub-sonic," the perfesser snapped. "What is Little Sam—a short-wave transmitter?"

"Little Sam's the baby," I said, short-like. "Don't go calling him outa his name, either. Now s'pose you tell us what you want?"

He pulled out a notebook and started looking through it.

"I'm a—scientist," he said. "Our foundation is studying eugenics, and we've got some

reports about you. They sound unbelievable. One of our men has a theory that natural mutations can remain undetected in undeveloped cultural regions, and—" He slowed down and stared at Uncle Les. "Can you really fly?" he asked.

Well, we don't like to talk about that. The preacher gave us a good dressing-down once. Uncle Les had got likkered up and went sailing over the ridges, scaring a couple of bear-hunters outa their senses. And it ain't in the Good Book that men should fly, neither. Uncle Les generally does it only on the sly, when nobody's watching.

So anyhow Uncle Les pulled his hat down further on his face and growled.

"That's plumb silly. Ain't no way a man can fly. These here modern contraptions I hear tell about—'tween ourselves, they don't really fly at all. Just a lot of crazy talk, that's all."

GALBRAITH blinked and studied his notebook again.

"But I've got hearsay evidence of a great many unusual things connected with your family. Flying is only one of them. I know it's theoretically impossible—and I'm not talking about planes—but—"

"Oh, shet your trap."

"The medieval witches' salve used aconite to give an illusion of flight, entirely subjective of course."

"Will you stop pesterin' me?" Uncle Les said, getting mad, on account of he felt embarrassed, I guess. Then he jumped up, threw his hat down on the porch, and flew away. After a minute he swooped down for his hat and made a face at the perfesser. He flew off down the gulch and we didn't see him for a while.

I got mad, too.

"You got no call to bother us," I said. "Next thing Uncle Les will do like Paw, and that'll be an awful nuisance. We ain't seen hide nor hair of Paw since that other city feller was around. He was a census-taker, I think."

Galbraith didn't say anything. He was looking kinda funny. I gave him a drink and he asked about Paw.

"Oh, he's around," I said. "Only you don't see him no more. He likes it better that way, he says."

"Yes," Galbraith said, taking another drink. "Oh, gosh! How old did you say you were?"

"Didn't say nothing about it."

"Well, what's the earliest thing you can remember?"

"Ain't no use remembering things. Clutters up your haid too much."

"It's fantastic," Galbraith said. "I hadn't expected to send a report like that back to the foundation."

"We don't want nobody pryin' around," I said. "Go 'way and leave us alone."

"But good heavens!" He looked over the porch rail and got interested in the shotgun-gadget. "What's that?"

"A thing," I said.

"What does it do?"

"Things," I said.

"Oh. May I look at it?"

"Sure," I said. "I'll give you the dingus if you'll go away."

He went over and looked at it. Paw got up from where he'd been sitting beside me, told me to get rid of the damyankee, and went into the house. The perfesser came back. "Extraordinary!" he said. "I've had training in electronics, and it seems to me you've got something very odd there. What's the principle?"

"The what?" I said. "It makes holes in things."

"It can't fire shells. You've got a couple of lenses where the breech should—how did you say it worked?"

"I dunno."

"Did you make it?"

"Me and Maw."

He asked a lot more questions.

"I dunno," I said. "Trouble with a shotgun is you gotta keep loading it. We sorta thought if we hooked on a few things it wouldn't need loading no more. It don't, neither."

"Were you serious about giving it to me?"

"If you stop bothering us."

"Listen," he said, "it's miraculous that you Hobbens have stayed out of sight so long."

"We got our ways."

"The mutation theory must be right. You must be studied. This is one of the most important discoveries since—" He kept on talking like that. He didn't make much sense.

Finally I decided there was only two ways to handle things, and after what Sheriff Abernathy had said, I didn't feel right about killing nobody till the sheriff had got over his fit of temper. I don't want to cause no ruckus.

"S'pose I go to New York with you, like you want?" I said. "Will you leave the family alone?"

He halfway promised, though he didn't want to. But he knuckled under and crossed his heart, on account of I said I'd wake up Little Sam if he didn't. He sure wanted to see Little Sam, but I told him that was no good. Little Sam couldn't go to New York anyhow. He's got to stay in his tank or he gets awful sick.

ANYWAY I satisfied the perfesser pretty well and he went off, after I'd promised to meet him in town next morning. I felt sick, though, I can tell you. I ain't been away from the folks overnight since that ruckus in the old country, when we had to make tracks fast.

Went to Holland, as I remember. Maw always had a soft spot fer the man that helped us get outa London. Named Little Sam after him. I fergit what his name was. Gwynn or Stuart or Pepys—I get mixed up when I think back beyond the War between the States.

That night we chewed the rag. Paw being invisible, Maw kept thinking he was getting more'n his share of the corn, but pretty soon she mellowed and let him have a demijohn. Everybody told me to mind my p's and q's.

"This here perfesser's awful smart," Maw said. "All perfessers are. Don't go bothering him any. You be a good boy or you'll ketch heck from me."

"I'll be good, Maw," I said. Paw whaled me alongside the haid, which wasn't fair, on account of I couldn't see him.

"That's so you won't fergit," he said.

"We're plain folks," Uncle Les was growling. "No good never came of trying to get above yourself."

"Honest, I ain't trying to do that," I said. "I only figgered—"

"You stay outa trouble!" Maw said, and just then we heard Grandpaw moving in the attic. Sometimes Grandpaw don't stir for a month at a time, but tonight he seemed right frisky.

So, natcherally, we went upstairs to see what he wanted.

He was talking about the perfesser.

"A stranger, eh?" he said. "Out upon the stinking knave. A set of rare fools I've gathered about me for my dotage! Only Saunk shows any shrewdness, and, dang my eyes, he's the worst fool of all."

I just shuffled and muttered something, on account of I never like to look at Grandpaw direct. But he wasn't paying me no mind. He raved on.

"So you'd go to this New York? 'Sblood, and hast thou forgot the way we shunned London and Amsterdam—and Nieuw Amsterdam—for fear of questioning? Wouldst thou be put in a freak show? Nor is that the worst danger."

Grandpaw's the oldest one of us all and he gets kinda mixed up in his language sometimes. I guess the lingo you learned when you're young sorta sticks with you. One thing, he can cuss better than anybody I've ever heard.

"Shucks," I said. "I was only trying to help."

"Thou puling brat," Grandpaw said. "'Tis thy fault and thy dam's. For building that device, I mean, that slew the Haley tribe. Hadst thou not, this scientist would never have come here."

"He's a perfesser," I said. "Name of Thomas Galbraith."

"I know. I read his thoughts through Little Sam's mind. A dangerous man. I never knew a sage who wasn't. Except perhaps Roger Bacon, and I had to bribe him to—but Roger was an exceptional man. Hearken."

"None of you may go to this New York. The moment we leave this haven, the moment we are investigated, we are lost. The pack would tear and rend us. Nor could all thy addle-pated flights skyward save thee, Lester—dost thou hear?"

"But what are we to do?" Maw said.

"Aw, heck," Paw said. "I'll just fix this perfesser. I'll drop him down the cistern."

"An' spoil the water?" Maw screeched. "You try it!"

"What foul brood is this that has sprung from my seed?" Grandpaw said, real mad. "Have ye not promised the sheriff that there will be no more killings—for a while at least? Is the word of a Hogben naught? Two things have we kept sacred through the centuries—our secret from the world, and the Hogben honor! Kill this man Galbraith and ye'll answer to me for it!"

We all turned white. Little Sam woke up again and started squealing. "But what'll we do?" Uncle Les said.

"Our secret must be kept," Grandpaw said. "Do what ye can, but no killing. I'll consider the problem."

He seemed to go to sleep then, though it was hard to tell.

THE next day I met Galbraith in town, all right, but first I run into Sheriff Aber-

nathy in the street and he gave me a vicious look.

"You stay outa trouble, Saunk," he said. "Mind what I tell you, now." It was right embarrassing.

Anyway, I saw Galbraith and told him Grandpaw wouldn't let me go to New York. He didn't look too happy, but he saw there was nothing that could be done about it.

His hotel room was full of scientific apparatus and kinda frightening. He had the shotgun-gadget set up, but it didn't look like he'd changed it any. He started to argue.

"Ain't no use," I said. "We ain't leavin' the hills. I spoke outa turn yesterday, that's all."

"Listen, Saunk," he said. "I've been inquiring around town about you Hogbens, but I haven't been able to find out much. They're close-mouthed around here. Still, such evidence would be only supporting factors. I know our theories are right. You and your family are mutants and you've got to be studied!"

"We ain't mutants," I said. "Scientists are always calling us outa our names. Roger Bacon called us homunculi, only—"

"What?" Galbraith shouted. "Who did you say?"

"Uh—he's a share-cropper over in the next county," I said hasty-like, but I could see the perfesser didn't swaller it. He started to walk around the room.

"It's no use," he said. "If you won't come to New York, I'll have the foundation send a commission here. You've got to be studied, for the glory of science and the advancement of mankind."

"Oh, golly," I said. "I know what that'd be like. Make a freak show outa us. It'd kill Little Sam. No. You gotta go away and leave us alone."

"Leave you alone? When you can create apparatus like this?" He pointed to the shotgun-gadget. "How does that work?" he wanted to know, sudden-like.

"I told you, I dunno. We just rigged it up. Listen, perfesser. There'd be trouble if people came and looked at us. Big trouble. Grandpaw says so."

Galbraith pulled at his nose.

"Well, maybe—suppose you answered a few questions for me, Saunk?"

"No commission?"

"We'll see."

"No, sir. I won't—"

Galbraith took a deep breath.

"As long as you tell me what I want to

know, I'll keep your whereabouts a secret."

"I thought this foundation thing of yours knows where you are?"

"Ah—yes," Galbraith said. "Naturally they do. But they don't know about *you*."

That gave me an idea. I coulda killed him easy, but if I had, I knew Grandpaw would of ruined me entire and, besides, there was the sheriff to think of. So I said, "Shucks," and nodded.

My, the questions that man asked! It left me dizzy. And all the while he kept getting more and more excited.

"How old is your grandfather?"

"Gosh, I dunno."

"Homunculi—mm-m—you mentioned that he was a miner once?"

"No, that was Grandpaw's paw," I said. "Tin mines, they were, in England. Only Grandpaw says it was called Britain then. That was during a sorta magic plague they had then. The people had to get the doctors—drooms? Droods?"

"Druids?"

"Uh-huh. The Druids was the doctors then, Grandpaw says. Anyhow, all the miners started dying round Cornwall, so they closed up the mines."

"What sort of plague was it?"

I TOLD him what I remembered from Grandpaw's talk, and the perfesser got very excited and said something about radioactive emanations, as nearly as I could figger out. It made uncommon bad sense.

"Artificial mutations caused by radioactivity!" he said, getting real pink around the jowls. "Your grandfather was born a mutant! The genes and chromosomes were rearranged into a new pattern—why, you may all be supermen!"

"Nope," I said. "We're Hogbens. That's all."

"A dominant, obviously a dominant. All your family are—ah—peculiar?"

"Now look!" I said.

"I mean, they could all fly?"

"I don't know how yet, myself. I guess we're kinda freakish. Grandpaw was smart. He allus taught us not to show off."

"Protective camouflage," Galbraith said. "Submerged in a rigid social culture, variations from the norm are more easily masked. In a modern, civilized culture, you'd stick out like a sore thumb. But here, in the backwoods, you're practically invisible."

"Only Paw," I said.

"Oh, gosh," he sighed. "Submerging these incredible natural powers of yours— Do you know the things you might have done?" And then all of a sudden he got even more excited, and I didn't much like the look in his eyes.

"Wonderful things," he repeated. "It's like stumbling on Aladdin's lamp."

"I wish you'd leave us alone," I said. "You and your commission!"

"Forget about the commission. I've decided to handle this privately for a while. Provided you'll cooperate. Help me, I mean. Will you do that?"

"Nope," I said.

"Then I'll bring the commission down from New York," he said triumphantly.

I thought that over.

"Well," I said finally, "what do you want me to do?"

"I don't know yet," he said slowly. "My mind hasn't fully grasped the possibilities."

But he was getting ready to grab. I could tell. I know that look.

I was standing by the window looking out, and all of a sudden I got an idea. I figgered it wouldn't be smart to trust the perfesser too much, anyhow. So I sort of ambled over to the shotgun-gadget and made a few little changes on it.

I knew what I wanted to do, all right, but if Galbraith had asked me why I was twisting a wire here and bending a whozis there I couldn't of told him. I got no eddication. Only now I knew the gadget would do what I wanted it to do.

The perfesser had been writing in his little notebook. He looked up and saw me.

"What are you doing?" he wanted to know.

"This don't look right to me," I said. "I think you monkeyed with them batteries. Try it now."

"In here?" he said, startled. "I don't want to pay a bill for damages. It must be tested under safety conditions."

"See that weather-cock out there, on the roof?" I pointed it out to him. "Won't do no harm to aim at that. You can just stand here by the window and try it out."

"It—it isn't dangerous?" He was aching to try the gadget, I could tell. I said it wouldn't kill nobody, and he took a long breath and went to the window and cuddled the stock of the gun against his cheek.

I stayed back a ways. I didn't want the sheriff to see me. I'd already spotted him, sitting on a bench outside the feed-and-grain

store across the street.

It happened just like I think. Galbraith pulled the trigger, aiming at the weather-cock on the roof, and rings of light started coming out of the muzzle. There was a fearful noise. Galbraith fell flat on his back, and the commotion was something surprising. People began screaming all over town.

I kinda felt it might be handy if I went invisible for a while. So I did.

Galbraith was examining the shotgun-gadget when Sheriff Abernathy busted in. The sheriff's a hard case. He had his pistol out and handcuffs ready, and he was cussing the perfesser immediate and rapid.

"I seen you," he yelled. "You city fellers think you can get away with anything down here! Well, you can't!"

"Saunk!" Galbraith cried, looking around. But of course he couldn't see me.

THEN there was an argument. Sheriff Abernathy had seen Galbraith fire the shotgun-gadget, and he's no fool. He drug Galbraith down on the street, and I come along, walking soft. People were running around like crazy. Most of them had their hands clapped to their faces.

The perfesser kept wailing that he didn't understand.

"I seen you!" Abernathy said. "You aimed that dingus of yours out the window and the next thing everybody in town's got a toothache! Try and tell me you don't understand!"

The sheriff's smart. He's known us Hogbens long enough so he ain't surprised when funny things happen sometimes. Also, he knew Galbraith was a scientist feller. So there was a ruckus and people heard what was going on and the next thing they was trying to lynch Galbraith.

But Abernathy got him away. I wandered around town for a while. The pastor was out looking at his church windows, which seemed to puzzle him. They was stained-glass, and he couldn't figger out why they was hot. I coulda told him that. There's gold in stained-glass windows; they use it to get a certain kind of red.

Finally I went down to the jailhouse. I was still invisible. So I eavesdropped on what Galbraith was saying to the sheriff.

"It was Saunk Hogben," the perfesser kept saying. "I tell you, he fixed that projector—"

"I saw you," Abernathy said. "You done it. Owl!" He put up his hand to his jaw.

"And you better stop it, fast! That crowd outside means business. Half the people in town have got toothaches."

I guess half the people in town had gold fillings in their teeth.

Then Galbraith said something that didn't surprise me too much. "I'm having a commission come down from New York—I meant to telephone the foundation tonight. They'll vouch for me."

So he was intending to cross us up, all along. I kinda felt that had been in his mind.

"You'll cure this toothache of mine—and everybody else's—or I'll open the doors and let in that lynch mob!" the sheriff howled. Then he went away to put an ice-bag on his cheek.

I snuck back a-ways, got visible again, and made a lot of noise coming along the passage, so Galbraith could hear me. I waited till he got through cussing me out. I just looked stupid.

"I guess I made a mistake," I said. "I can fix it, though."

"You've done enough fixing!" He stopped. "Wait a minute. What did you say? You can cure this—what is it?"

"I been looking at that shotgun-gadget," I said. "I think I know what I did wrong. It's sorta tuned in on gold now, and all the gold in town's shooting out rays or heat or something."

"Induced selective radioactivity," Galbraith muttered, which didn't seem to mean much. "Listen. That crowd outside—do they ever have lynchings in this town?"

"Not more'n once or twice a year," I said. "And we already had two this year, so we filled our quota. Wish I could get you up to our place, though. We could hide you easy."

"You'd better do something!" he said. "Or I'll get that commission down from New York. You wouldn't like that, would you?"

I never seen such a man fer telling lies and keeping a straight face.

"It's a cinch," I said. "I can rig up the gadget so it'll switch off the rays immediate. Only I don't want people to connect us Hogbens with what's going on. We like to live quiet. Look, s'pose I go back to your hotel, change over the gadget, and then all you have to do is get all the people with toothaches together and pull the trigger."

"But—well, but—"

He was afraid of more trouble. I had to talk him into it. The crowd was yelling outside, so it wasn't too hard. Finally I went

away, but I came back, invisible-like, and listened when Galbraith talked to the sheriff.

They fixed it all up. Everybody with toothaches was going to the town hall and set. Then Abernathy would bring the perffesser over, with the shotgun-gadget and try it out.

"Will it stop the tootchaches?" the sheriff wanted to know. "For sure?"

"I'm—quite certain it will."

Abernathy had caught that hesitation.

"Then you better try it on me first. Just to make sure. I don't trust you."

It seemed like nobody was trusting nobody.

I HIKED back to the hotel and made the switch-over in the shotgun-gadget. And then I run into trouble. My invisibility was wearing thin. That's the worst part of being just a kid.

After I'm a few hundred years older I can stay invisible all the time if I want to. But I ain't right mastered it yet. Thing was, I needed help now because there was something I had to do, and I couldn't do it with people watching.

I went up on the roof and called Little Sam. After I'd tuned in on his haid, I had him put the call through to Paw and Uncle Les. After a while Uncle Les come flying down from the sky, riding mighty heavy, on account of he was carrying Paw. Paw was cussing because a hawk had chased them.

"Nobody seen us, though," Uncle Les said. "I think."

"People got their own troubles in town today," I said. "I need some help. That perffesser's gonna call down his commission and study us, no matter what he promises."

"Ain't much we can do, then," Paw said. "We cain't kill that feller. Grandpaw said not to."

So I told 'em my idea. Paw being invisible, he could do it easy. Then we made a little place in the roof so we could see through it, and looked down into Galbraith's room.

We was just in time. The sheriff was standing there, with his pistol out, just waiting, and the perffesser, pale around the chops, was pointing the shotgun gadget at Abernathy. It went along without a hitch. Galbraith pulled the trigger, a purple ring of light popped out, and that was all. Except that the sheriff opened his mouth and gulped.

"You wasn't faking! My toothache's gone!" Galbraith was sweating, but he put up a good front. "Sure it works," he said. "Naturally. I told you—"

"C'mon down to the town hall. Everybody's waiting. You better cure us all, or it'll be just too bad for you."

They went out. Paw snuck down after them, and Uncle Les picked me up and flew on their trail, keeping low to the roofs where we wouldn't be spotted. After a while we was fixed outside one of the town hall's windows, watching.

I ain't heard so much misery since the great plague of London. The hall was jam-full, and everybody had a toothache and was moaning and yelling. Abernathy come in with the perffesser, who was carrying the shotgun-gadget, and a scream went up.

Galbraith set the gadget on the stage, pointing down at the audience, while the sheriff pulled out his pistol again and made a speech, telling everybody to shet up and they'd get rid of their toothaches.

I couldn't see Paw, natcherally, but I knew he was up on the platform. Something funny was happening to the shotgun-gadget. Nobody noticed, except me, and I was watching for it. Paw, invisible of course, was making a few changes. I'd told him how, but he knew what to do as well as I did. So pretty soon the shotgun was rigged the way we wanted it.

What happened after that was shocking. Galbraith aimed the gadget and pulled the trigger, and rings of light jumped out, yaller this time. I'd told Paw to fix the range so nobody outside the town hall would be bothered. But inside the hall—

Well, it sure fixed them tootchaches. Nobody's gold filling can ache if he ain't got a gold filling.

The gadget was fixed now so it worked on everything that wasn't growin'. Paw had got the range just right. The seats was gone all of a sudden, and so was part of the chandelier. The audience, being bunched together, got it good. Pegleg Jaffe's glass eye was gone, too. Them that had false teeth lost 'em. Everybody sorta got a once-over-lightly haircut.

Also, the whole audience lost their clothes. Shoes ain't growin' things, and no more are pants or shirts or dresses. In a trice everybody in the hall was naked as needles. But, shucks, they'd got rid of their toothaches, hadn't they?

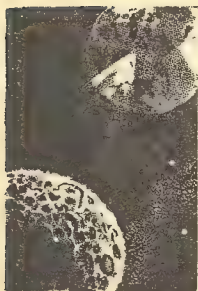
WE WAS back to home an hour later, all but Uncle Les, when the door busted open and in come Uncle Les, with the

(Continued on page 112)

The Tongue Cannot Tell

By MANLY WADE WELLMAN

John Latimer came back from the Moon—but what he saw there proved to be too alien for man's understanding!



SO MUCH had been said, written and theorized about John Latimer and by comparison, so little about Elspeth Dawes, that this one account may well begin with her—begin in the parlor of her New York apartment at mid-afternoon on June 18 of last year, which year already bears in sensational journals the awesome title of the Year of the Conquest of Space.

She sat, serene and fine-chiselled and gray-eyed, by a table littered with tea-things. Her natural and constant dignity made her seem taller and older than she was. From across the table gazed Michael Stone like a handsome and adoring hound.

"I wouldn't suggest that I was better than John, or more worthy or attractive," he was saying, "but you need somebody to take care of you."

She smiled, showing none of the weariness she felt, and reminded him that he had said the same thing every day for months.

"Since last June," nodded Michael. "Since the anniversary of the day John kissed you goodbye and got into his rocket and fired himself away toward Mars. Now another year is gone. Two years in all. You know he'll never come back and marry you."

She touched his hand, a motherly gesture, though Michael was older than she. "Don't think I'm not flattered, darling. But I don't love you."

"That would come," pronounced Michael confidently. Many women would jump at the chance to love him and he knew it.

Elspeth tilted back her head in one of the reveries he found both charming and baffling.

"Two years. I wanted to go in that rocket. So did Dr. Vinkelmann and the others. There was room for two—more than two—but John flew away alone."

"He had a fixation on all the glory of the flight," burst out Michael. "Lord, Elspeth! When you told him you loved him how could he leave you, even if all the planets were solid gold?"

She chose to consider that a rhetorical question. "I watched at the Mount Wilson telescope," she went on. "The rocket sailed by the Moon, then curved behind it and never came out again. It was never seen to crash."

"It must have finished him," argued Michael. "Not one of the Earth-Mars or Earth-Venus attempts ever went so near the Moon for fear of just such a crash. Even if John survived a fall like that, how long would he last without air?"

She looked at him once and there was silence until the telephone's ring broke it. Elspeth picked up the instrument.

"Yes," she said. "Oh. How are you, Dr. Vinkelmann? . . . What?" Her voice rose in sharp protest at some unthinkable news. "No! You're joking. That—that's impossible!"

Michael started up. "What's happened? Can I help?"

"You—you've seen him?" Elspeth was saying into the telephone. "Actually seen him? You swear that? Thank God, thank God!"

She set the telephone down and sat there. She did not move, nor did she appear to see or hear until Michael touched her shoulder. Then she rose and moved almost violently away from him.

"John's rocket has landed at the Staten Island port," she said. "He's alive. He's safe."

Contemporary newspapers tell about the excitement over John Latimer's return, the gathering of scientists, reporters and throngs of the curious. They report fully on the returned voyager. The photographs reveal him as dressed in tattered garments, marble-white and marble-quiet, looking at nothing. When he did not reply to questions his inter-



Elspeth stooped quickly and caught up the severed bolt head

viewers were piqued and made a mystery of it.

"His eyes," said one eloquent rewrite man, "appeared to hold viewpoints of their own, beyond and above the city and everybody in it." Twice he refused to speak into radio microphones that were thrust into his very face. His longest vocal observation was to the mayor of New York, who came among the first.

"It's not worth this trouble," he said gently. "May I go to a hotel?" And police

escorted him to one. He registered and went to his room. Presumably he slept. Elspeth telephoned him seven times, Dr. Vinkelmann nine. They got no answer.

IN THE morning of June 19 Dr. Vinkelmann, bullying his way through a cordon of police and hotel employees, roused Latimer, dressed him in fresh clothes and hurried him in a taxi to Elspeth's apartment. During the night she had been miserable, then hysterical, then angry. Now she was

deliberately calm.

"Well, John." She greeted him with studied cordiality. "Home is the sailor."

He waited before answering, giving her nervousness time to steal back. Then, brightly, "Hello, Elspeth. How nice to see you." He might have been only an hour away. No, not that. He might have been centuries away, have forgotten her.

Abashed and hurt, Elspeth glanced at Dr. Vinkelmann. The doctor's heavy moustache drooped and his pince-nez flashed sympathy over Latimer's shoulder. One stubby finger tapped a temple. But the dumb show was not convincing and Latimer did not look in the least demented.

"Two years. . . ." began Elspeth.

"So they tell me," nodded Latimer. "May I sit down?" He did so. "That's hard to believe. I figured a month at most." Then his lean face lighted with a triumphant grin.

"Oh, that's it. The lunar day's a month long. Twenty-four or five such days would be two terrestrial years, almost exactly." He looked from one to the other. "The lunar day," he said again, "is the length of a terrestrial month."

Vinkelmann fiddled with his moustache. "You knew that long ago, John," he said.

"On the moon," replied Latimer, "you don't think of it. A day's a day, neither more nor less. That's why the time seems less than a month."

Elspeth, staring hard, realized that the change in him was as tremendous as it was indefinable.

To them, without much coaxing, he told his story. He told it casually save for certain perplexed pauses.

He said that he had felt languid during the flight from Earth and that his observations, vague and inaccurate, were not worth keeping or discussing. As he approached the Moon he realized that its gravity pull would catch him but he did not feel panic—nor was he greatly relieved that he did not die at the end of the fall. As his course curved he did study, with some reawakening of natural curiosity, that rear half of the Moon that man had never seen before.

"The early flights that smashed on the Moon hit the airless side we see from here," he reminded them, "and flights beyond have been made only when the Moon was not near at hand to observe. Now, from behind. . ." He paused. "The Moon's like a bitten apple, shown best side out. From Earth it looks

round." Again he paused. "But it isn't."

"Isn't?" repeated Vinkelmann. "How do you mean?"

"A bite's gone, I say. A great chunk, a big crater on the other side. Perhaps a thousand miles across and fully half as deep."

That was not so unfamiliar a concept as to surprise either Vinkelmann or Elspeth. The doctor's moustache began to bristle.

"Of course!" he cried. "When the Moon was still soft Earth pulled the Moon's center by power of gravity—"

"And the rear surface caved in to match," added Elspeth, proud to cap a scientific theory properly.

"Then the Moon's gravity would be greater at the bottom of that hole so close to its center," continued Vinkelmann. "Just as in the old fanciful stories, eh? There might be atmosphere—water—even life!"

"There are," Latimer informed him calmly. "All three."

They stared and he continued with no apparent sense of shocking them. He explained that the ship had gone out of control as it struck and that he had sprained wrist and knee. He had lain for some minutes, then opened the hatch and crawled out.

"But the atmosphere," broke in Vinkelmann anxiously. "You did not test it."

"I didn't bother," said Latimer.

"That's not like you, John," scolded Vinkelmann.

"Anyway," said Latimer, "I could breathe it."

Elspeth was feeling faint and light as though some terrible danger impended, ready to loosen itself at the very sound of Latimer's voice.

"You saw the living Moon," she prompted tensely. "What was it like?"

For the first time Latimer scowled as he fell silent. At length he shrugged a little, as in defeat.

"That I can't tell you," he said.

He did try to tell, tried hard. "It was . . ." he said, and again "It was—well, Elspeth calls it the living Moon. It lived. Very much it lived."

"Was it a jungle?" Vinkelmann tried to prompt him, and Latimer caught at the word with a little nod and smile of thanks.

"That's something like it. It was jungly, in a way. Yet. . . ."

ANOTHER stop, like a child caught without having studied his lesson.

"You've seen the imaginative paintings of prehistoric forests? Or a tangle of pond-bottom weeds through a microscope?"

"It was like that?" said Vinkelmann.

Latimer shook his head. "I can't say. But I thought of both those things when first I got outside and looked around. The sky. . ."

"What color?" asked Elspeth.

He gazed at her with something of shy apology. "It was a new color."

"You mean, not in the spectrum?"

"Spectrum? No, not in that. Quite mild and clear. You should have seen it." He sighed. "Anyway, I made myself a crutch. . ."

"From the vegetation?" Vinkelmann was prompting him again.

"If it was vegetation. A stem, soft and strange. I could hobble on it. I started to explore." His eyes glowed briefly, as though crowded with wonders. Then they grew dull and once again he faltered.

"I'm afraid I'm no good. I wasn't prepared. Nobody could be prepared. We have only Earth words, coined to name and describe things of Earth. And this was the back of the Moon."

Vinkelmann tried again to help with questions and Latimer made progress for half a dozen exchanges before he grew inarticulate again. When Vinkelmann asked about animal life, Latimer mentioned things that flew.

"They floated like toy kites," he elaborated a little. Beyond that he could not or would not go, though he had seen them often and close at hand. Other things, clumsy and huge, lumbered on the ground surface.

"What were those things like?" put in Elspeth. "Elephants?"

"No," he fairly snapped, "they weren't like elephants. Wait, I'm sorry to be rude. But you can't question me. Speaking of elephants, remember about the blind men fumbling around and each one getting a different impression of the elephant? I was like that.

"Someone with me might have caught something else. Enough people with me might have done what the blind men did—gathered a number of details and put them together into something that could suggest a little of the truth. But those things—well, they didn't even walk."

"You said they moved through the jungle," Elspeth reminded him.

"I said nothing about jungle," he insisted. "I took the word jungle because it was the

best I could do and let me assure you it isn't good enough. As for the things, they didn't have legs. Not as we know legs. Nor heads as we know heads. I don't even know their substance. I can't describe it. Their shape—well, if I could draw. . ."

She brought pencil and paper. Latimer began to sketch a series of uneven curves, like a boy's crude impression of a cloud. Then he crumpled the sheet and threw it away.

"No good," he said. "How about lunch, you two?"

Vinkelmann tried to withdraw but Latimer insisted that he come along. It was a good lunch and Latimer ate as if starved.

"What food did you have on the Moon?" ventured Elspeth. Latimer laid down his fork and concentrated for a moment.

"I don't remember," he said then. "No, not exactly that." Another brief silence and he spoke with great earnestness. "You must try to understand that I'm different again. Earthy. Things that were clear on the Moon are vague here."

"You're certainly nothing like the John Latimer who flew away two years ago," she could not help saying.

"Naturally I'm not," he agreed solemnly. Yet again a pause, half diffident and half lofty. "It's a little as though I'd bobbed in and out of another dimension and still have some of it sticking to me."

Lunch over, Latimer paused at the cashier's desk to make change. Vinkelmann caught Elspeth's hand and spoke quickly and softly.

"I'm leaving you with him. Remember the important things he has said—that he is unable to make us understand in words we know the things he has experienced. He is terribly distressed. He has a mighty cargo of secrecy, and he cannot unload it. But you—he was your lover. Love is a great and wide language, and perhaps. . ."

Vinkelmann was gone. Latimer joined Elspeth. Together they returned to her apartment and Latimer spoke rather embarrassedly.

"I'm sorry we're alone. Because you're going to say something unpleasant."

Elspeth drew herself up, as though she expected cold rain to fall. "I may as well say it. Somebody—Michael Stone—wants to marry me."

Latimer seemed neither surprised nor worried. "Now that I know how long I was gone I wonder you didn't marry before this."

"You wouldn't have cared!" protested

Elspeth sharply.

He took her hand and with an impersonal kindness that made him seem old, drew her down beside him on the divan.

"I'm going to try again," he said. "Try to tell you about the Moon."

FOR the better part of an hour he talked, of colors unknown in any Earthly spectrum, of living, moving beings whose patterns of shape and behavior were unknown among Earthly creatures, of sounds and voices inimitable and indescribable. Sometimes he spoke swiftly and eloquently, sometimes with stumbling unease. Finally he smiled.

"Now do you understand?"

Slowly Elspeth shook her head. "I can't grasp it, John. Nature has another face unseen on Earth."

"It's not that simple. On the Moon there are no faces. A face is not a lunar concept." Latimer's smile faded. "Now you begin to see that I'll never write these things for a scientific bulletin nor lecture clubwomen about them."

She steadied herself again. "What about Michael Stone?"

"If you marry him, you might do very well together."

"John, you don't care!" she cried out again.

He did not even draw himself tense to her mood. "It isn't that, exactly," he said. "My sense of proportion is all scrambled. I spoke about an extra dimension."

She drew sudden bitterness from the reminder. "You feel a new fullness, I suppose. And everything I represented to you seems flat."

"Earth itself is flat," he amended quietly. "Columbus was wrong and the scoffers right. Earth, taken alone, is as flat as a cold pancake. As flat as old coffee."

Elspeth's brief anger was gone. She began to weep, hating herself for it. Latimer rose and made a little bow.

"I'll go now. I have to think and plan."

"You don't care," she charged for the third time.

"That's an indictment and by Earth standards I must deserve it," he said thoughtfully.

"Oh, if only you were sorrowful or hurt or stunned!" she babbled passionately. "If only I could do something for you."

"You can't. . . so do nothing," he bade her gently and in some wise helpfully. "Believe me, Elspeth, I'm not warped in spirit or mind. I've only been to the Moon."

"Certainly, certainly!" She was ironical again. "And the experience increased you to such a gigantic and lofty stature that—"

"The experience humbled and confused me so that I must fight every instant and with every weapon to endure and comprehend it, if I ever do."

He left. The following day Professor Vinkelmann telephoned Elspeth to say that Latimer was reconditioning his rocket for a new flight into space.

Michael Stone drops from the story at this point. Elspeth refused him, finally and more than a little sternly. But she saw nothing of Latimer, even when he sent her a note inviting her to visit his workshop on Staten Island. Vinkelmann came to see her after a few days.

"John will be in trouble," he said, "if he is John."

"Part of him is John," said Elspeth at once. "Do you mean he's sick, or. . . ?"

Vinkelmann shook his head. "The newspapers didn't like his treatment of them. Neither did some scientists. There's a theory going around that this is an imposter. Someone who looks like John, and has evolved a story fantastic enough to impress us all."

"You're one who believes the theory," said Elspeth at once.

He shook his head but too slowly for absolute denial. "You must admit he's very strange."

"But wouldn't he be? Can't you see that he'd be bound to change greatly after such an experience?"

Vinkelmann nodded almost ponderously. "John, yes. That stands to reason—reason of a sort. But why should his rocket change as much as it has changed."

Elspeth stared. She did not understand and Vinkelmann saw her mystification.

"We have had only the briefest of looks at the rocket in which he came. It landed and he got out and everyone was interested in him—at once. Before he left he locked the panels but some of us remember the rocket in which John Latimer flew away. This one looks like it enough to resemble pictures and specifications. But it is not the same."

"Then," said Elspeth, "you think this is a duplicate John Latimer in a rocket similar to the original. But he returned from the moon."

"He says he did. It's as shallow and simple as that. He dropped out of the sky by daytime and seemed to be John Latimer. Every-

one was so moved and amazed at what seemed to be John Latimer's return—well, and now he has moved his rocket into his workshop, admitting nobody.

"Remember, my dear, that John Latimer left a fortune in banks when he flew away. It might be worth the while of a clever imposter to botch together a rocket craft—after all, many men can do that, and power it with atomic, even though the government still holds most formulae—and come along to appear as John Latimer, drawing his money out.

"As a matter of fact, the bank accepts him as John Latimer and has honored several checks. True, the sums have been spent for materials and tools—we have checked that. But later he may make a large withdrawal and vanish. After all, nobody has been in his new workshop, and he will not allow. . . .

"He invited me," said Elspeth.

"You?" You know nothing about rockets and space flight. Why . . . but of course!" Vinkelmann brightened. "He could trust the limitations of your mind where he would not dare admit an engineer."

"Why would he want me at all?" Elspeth demanded. "When he met me he seemed casual—on guard. . . ."

"This fills out the picture," pursued Vinkelmann. "Casual, on guard, yes. As a stranger posing as John Latimer he was not interested romantically in the girl John Latimer loved. But you were alone together, eh? He changed his mind. Perhaps he wants to take other of John Latimer's possessions than the money deposited in banks."

ELSPETH stared again. When Vinkelmann had entered he had been baffled, of two minds, about whether or not the returner from the sky was John Latimer. Now he seemed to have come to a decision, and was offering one new argument after another to clarify that decision.

"Elspeth," said Vinkelmann, "you might do a great service by accepting that invitation."

"Go to his workshop!" protested Elspeth. "If he isn't John?"

"I'll tell you things to look for. Come back and report. Then we can be sure."

Elspeth fell silent. She realized that he must be acting and appearing like John Latimer, or whoever impersonated him, when he went into one of his quiet moods.

"I'll do it," she said.

The workshop was on a cleared knoll close to the south edge of Staten Island. It rose like a cylinder of steel-braced concrete, a silo or donjon in shape. Elspeth walked up the path to the doorway. She knocked.

"Who's there?" said John Latimer's voice—if it was an imitation, it was excellent.

"Elspeth."

"Who's with you?"

"Nobody."

"Wait." The door opened slowly upon a brightly lighted interior, and she stepped across the threshold.

Latimer wore coveralls. Out of its many pockets peeped tools. He looked at Elspeth and briefly showed such a smile as she remembered.

"I've been slow about accepting your invitation," she ventured.

"Slow? I didn't realize. Perhaps I'm still on lunar time."

Her eyes turned upward. The roof of the cylinder was open. Stars twinkled. Over the rim of masonry the Moon crawled like a pale, anxious face, peering down. The Moon, whose other side no man had ever seen, unless John Latimer—if this were John Latimer. . . .

"Excuse me if I keep busy." He turned back to his cartridge-shaped craft, standing on end in the middle of the metal-faced floor like an obelisk of pale smooth alloy.

From a bench he took a small automatic welding torch, and with this he skillfully sprayed brightness on a narrow rough patch, at the same time gouging with a flat blade. Bits of the metal oxidized away and then he stepped back, nodding in satisfaction at the new smoothness he had wrought.

"I've just granted an interview to the newspapers," he said. "My only one. I've announced my time of departure—August eighth, at eleven p.m."

"Departure," Elspeth repeated.

"My new flight will profit by the blunders of the first."

She was computing in her head. "August eighth. That's next month. No, only two weeks."

"Right. And I've much to do." He moved around the curve of the craft, producing a rather delicate wrench with which he prodded, then tightened, a small bolt head. When it was adjusted to his plainly exact taste he used the torch again. The bolt head dropped away, severed, and he carefully smoothed the roughness where it had been. Again he

moved, adjusting something else beyond. Elspeth took a step as if to follow.

"You're going back to the Moon? You'll stay there?"

He shook his head without lifting his eyes to her. "Not if I can make an adequate landing and leave my rocket in condition to fly. The Moon would flatten out, too, if I stayed too long.

"But there, with the reduced lunar gravity, I can retune this rocket once again and take off on a longer shot—a successful one, the first successful flight of history to another planet. Mars, or Venus."

He bent to his work. He concentrated on the blazing torch. Elspeth stooped quickly and, with her handkerchief, caught up the severed bolt head, which was still hot. She swaddled it and thrust it into the purse she carried.

"To Mars or Venus," she said. "That will take considerable planning and construction."

"And considerable money. All I have. I'm carguing this rocket with things I'll need for the longer try."

"All your money." She remembered Vinkelman's suspicion. She touched the rocket. "This smooth plating—I never saw the like of—"

"Don't do that!" He whirled and shut off the torch. Fishing a soft cloth from his hip pocket, he carefully rubbed and polished the spot she had fingered. "Even a fingertip leaves perspiration and makes rust. The least micrometric unevenness may turn out a serious fault while I'm negotiating the atmosphere."

"John, are you making fun of me? You said that this rocket crashed on the Moon. That must have made tremendous unevennesses, and nothing micrometric about them." Glancing up at the faultless sheen, she found herself forced to speak her thoughts. "There certainly isn't any evidence that this is the craft in which John Latimer left Earth and landed on the Moon."

"No more it is," he said.

She turned on him, feeling the blood flow out of her face and away down past her heart. She felt light-headed, feeble-kneed. She wished she could sit down.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "this was made on the Moon. My wreck was the pattern."

"But how? How?"

"It was made. I had help?"

"Intelligent help?"

HE SHRUGGED. "When you use the word you mean Earth intelligence, the formal development by Earth's schools and customs and traditions. I won't use the word, which is an Earth word. But I had help."

"From the Moon's creatures," she said, and irony forced itself into her voice. "Which were they, John? Those lumbering surface beings, or the flying ones like toy kites?"

"Neither."

"Then you're going to say the Moon has people. Who was right about the people of the Moon, John? Edgar Allan Poe or H. G. Wells?"

"I say nothing of people or intelligence. I had help and it was good help. It made possible the building of a craft and the powering of that craft so that I could return. Things on the Moon gave me that."

Her hand, straying into her purse, touched the bit of metal she had filched. She changed the subject. "Why did you ask me here, instead of scientists who might represent help on Earth?"

"They'd fail me and I'd fail them. Let's try another feeble comparison. Do you remember the war?"

"I was a child then."

"Men went to war and came back. They spoke or wrote about what they'd done; seen, felt, endured."

"Not very successfully," reminded Elspeth.

"That's what I mean," said Latimer. "They couldn't. Or think of a savage coming back to his far-off tribe and trying to explain how he had lived in New York. He couldn't. And those problems are tiny ones compared with mine. I've been away from this little planet, Elspeth."

"What happened to me when I was away I can't get across to those who stayed in words or reason or parallels or even emotions. Mind and heart are mute. But the spirit. . . ."

"I hoped to get an echo, at least, in you. Somebody must be left who understands me if not understanding what I've seen or done. Now I'm fumbling around again. Aren't you bored?"

"Probably you are," she said.

"I'm sorry. I should say that, shouldn't I?"

"Don't distress yourself saying anything," she bade him, and walked out and toward the lights of the suburb beyond.

It was midnight when she walked into Vinkelman's study and put on his table the bolt head from Latimer's workshop.

"There it is," she said. "A sample from his rocket. You said that you could test it—tell pretty surely if it was the same material that went into the rocket that flew away."

Vinkelmann turned the thing over and over. He weighed it in his palm, then on a small scale.

"Hmmm," he said. "Hmmm." He became almost as rapt as Latimer. With a small gouge he worked, as carefully as a jeweller, to detach a tiny particle from the bolt head.

Elspeth watched, without word or gesture lest she detract him. She thought about the man who looked like John Latimer but who seemed more strange than a ghost returned. Vinkelmann produced chemicals, tested the particle, then tested other particles in other ways.

"Hmmmm," he said again. He took off his spectacles and gazed up at Elspeth. "This changes things."

"It's the same?"

"No. It is very much not the same. Very, very different. Somewhere I get the sense of doing John Latimer a great injustice. He didn't bring back a clumsy imitation. He brought back an immensely important opposite."

She waited for him to continue.

"This," and he lifted the bolt head, "is an alloy we don't know. It has metals in it that we're aware of—iron, aluminum—and at least two elements that I, at least, cannot at once isolate or comprehend. If it came from his rocket. . . ."

"It did," Elspeth assured him.

"If so, then John Latimer has in his possession an alloy that would make him wealthy out of hand, beyond the limits of the fortune we fancied an imposter was trying to steal. Emphatically that is not the same rocket in which he flew away. Emphatically again it is a scientific wonder beyond the knowledge of John Latimer before he left Earth. beyond my knowledge too."

"And what does this mean?"

"It might mean myriads of things. The simplest explanation is that we have the real John Latimer, really back from the Moon, on which he achieved or was given a new metal—and a host of other experiences which he finds himself incapable of explaining." He rose. "I had better get in touch with—"

"With nobody," said Elspeth quickly.

He had been reaching for the telephone but he drew back his hand.

"You're right," he agreed. He looked old

and perplexed. "With nobody. I begin, a little, to understand John. A very little as he might hope to be understood."

Again he turned the bit of metal over, studying it. "Light," he said. "Strong—stronger than any practicable alloy. Elastic. And almost entirely free from friction. Friction! John is trying to be free of friction himself."

"He's trying to be free," said Elspeth. "Free, period, as the wisecrackers say. I begin to understand too."

THEY sat down together. "John cannot spend his time and energy on those who don't want to grasp his experience," said Vinkelmann.

"Marco Polo was called a liar. Captain John Smith was doubted. And Cagliostro, reputed to be a master charlatan—suddenly I begin to wonder if he might not have told truths nobody could appreciate."

"Think of Galileo," murmured Elspeth. "Think of Darwin."

"Now John finds himself among fools and doubters and stay-at-homes. To try to convince them, even to impress them, he must wear out his tongue, his mind, his life." Vinkelmann studied the bolt head again. "This came from the Moon, Elspeth."

"He says he had help there," she nodded.

"Help on the Moon," mused Vinkelmann. "On his native planet he despairs of getting help. No wonder he hurries to leave. I feel sick for myself and my colleagues—we cannot help even if we want to. All we can do is not hinder."

"And I?" asked Elspeth.

"Do not hinder him either," said Vinkelmann gently. "He has only two weeks. He leaves before midnight of August eighth. The newspapers will make a Roman holiday of that. How could John endure it?"

"He doesn't intend to," replied Elspeth. "I suddenly understand something else."

It was 10 o'clock on the night of August 7th when Elspeth knocked again at the door of Latimer's cylindrical work building.

"It's Elspeth," she called to him. "Dr. Vinkelmann is with me."

"You can come in," he said from the other side of the door. "Tell Vinkelmann he must wait."

Elspeth's heart was beating fast. "If you want me. . . ."

"I told you why I wanted you." He opened the door a crack.

"Let us both in," she begged. "You need us both. Please let me explain—inside."

She pushed against the door and after a moment he yielded. She and Vinkelmann entered. John looked at them for a silent moment, then walked back to the rocket. He began to stow things inside the open port—packages, tins and tools.

"So you knew," he said to Elspeth.

"That you meant to go tonight, and avoid tomorrow's crowd and hullabaloo? It wasn't hard to guess that."

Latimer's eyes turned toward Vinkelmann. "I never invited you."

"He knows why," appealed Elspeth. "He feels embarrassed at being here. But I persuaded him to come and say goodbye to both of us. I want to go with you."

Latimer paused in the act of gathering up another armful of supplies. "You don't understand what you're asking."

"You don't understand what she's offering, John," put in Vinkelmann. "You need her. You admit that your single understanding and sensation have not been enough for the demands put upon them. It is like one eye trying to comprehend the depth of the third dimension. With Elspeth you will have two minds. Two viewpoints giving depth to the awareness of a single heart behind them both."

"It'll be like the blind man," said Latimer. "With another blind man, both of them scrambling clumsily around the elephant."

"Touching it in two places and comparing touches and impressions," said Elspeth. "The blind lead the blind—and they don't always fall into the ditch. Sometimes one pulls the other back from the brink when he begins to slip."

"Now, those words sound a trifle sensible," observed Latimer, turning again from his stowage work. "But I say you don't understand. If you come with me you'll never return to Earth."

"Earth is flat." She gave him his own words.

He smiled at that. "Think of the dangers. We stand a good chance of injury or death when we land."

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," said Elspeth. "Lots of the old worn-out proverbs seem to make sense just now."

"Will you have so much if the venture is successful?"

Elspeth refused to let tears of earnestness come into her eyes.

"What you've seen and done, John—is it so big that you can't endure to share it? Or is it so small that it isn't enough for two? John, I won't hinder you. I'll help you."

Vinkelmann turned his back and walked to the door, looking out.

"If I took you," Latimer said to Elspeth, "you'd be a memory of what I reject here."

"What you keep," she insisted. "Earth, too, is a planet."

"Why," he said, "so it is." He gazed around him at the workshop and then to the open door and into the night outside, as if he found the things of Earth new and amazing.

"There's room for two in your rocket," said Elspeth. "And more than room for two in the universe."

He caught her hand.

"Get in," he said.

Vinkelmann looked around, in time to see Latimer following Elspeth in. The port clanged shut behind them. Vinkelmann left quickly, hurrying to a safe distance. From afar he saw the sudden fire-jewelled soaring away of the rocket.

That is the last Earth knows of John Latimer and Elspeth Dawes—except that telescopes hastily trained on their flight saw the rocket curve away behind the Moon. Days later it, or what must have been it, reappeared beyond, driving straight away to Mars as an arrow to a target. Most observers think it made a safe landing.

Thunder and lightning, storm and flood—these are weapons of Mart Havers as he champions humanity's cause in **LORD OF THE STORM**, an extraordinary novel of the future by Keith Hammond in the

September issue of our companion magazine—

STARTLING STORIES

NOW ON SALE—15c AT ALL STANDS

THE READER SPEAKS

(Continued from page 8)

is **THE POWER AND THE GLORY**, by Henry Kuttner. It is, we firmly believe, unusual in thought and content, even for this master of the different in sf and fantasy alike.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY is primarily the story of a man named Miller, a once-honest lawyer who has for years been under the power of a human crazy to attain world domination. The latter, Slade, has learned of a power-radiation weapon to be found on a mysterious mountain-top in Alaska and he sends Miller up there to get it.

The world into which Miller stumbles atop the mountain is not what he or anyone else expects—it is past and future at one and the same time, a land where speech has long since been discarded and mastery of atomics is the rule rather than the exception.

Curiously enough, by his very humanity, Miller becomes something of a catalyst in a deadly conflict for power raging in this land where power can be plucked from ground or air alike. It takes tremendous courage for Miller to play his role, courage which results in his own self redemption—and in a whale of an exciting time for readers of any imaginative tendencies whatsoever.

George O. Smith heads the novelet procession with one of his most interesting scientific concepts in **QUARANTINE**, the story of Tony Morrow, research chemist who is seeking to create a brass alloy of increased hardness.

Tony meets with success—in fact, he invents the hardest metal ever known—but paradoxically his troubles are only begun. The big hitch is that the hardness he has created is, in effect, a metallic plague—one which infects other adjoining metals remorselessly and is even tough enough in molecular structure to withstand the fissionizing effect of an atomic bomb dropped by the Army in desperation at the center of the zone of infection.

Tony finds an answer, finally—one as ingenious as Mr. Smith, a master of ingenuity where scientific theory is concerned, has ever come up with. This is science fiction at its pseudo-scientific best.

One of the riddles of the ages is Nostradamus, that strange physician of medieval France who either did or did not prophesy everything that has happened to the world since his lifetime and a lot that has yet to come. To many his writings, with their odd, cryptic vagueness, were doggerel gibberish, interpretable in any way which suits their reader.

To others, he was a true prophet, forced by the faith and politics of his time, to draw

a protective mantle over his prophecies. Manly Wade Wellman, in his **THE TIME-LESS TOMORROW**, has created a fascinating fictional personality for the old seer and planted him in as odd a bit of business as any of us is likely ever to think up. A bit of sf that is well off the usual trail.

And, as already mentioned, there will be shorts—along with the regular features. It will be a good issue to get aboard.

LETTERS FROM READERS

AND so to hit the sack—the mail sack, which seems to be a little lighter than of recent months. But there is still enough in it to make reading, sorting, editing and answering the missives quite an operation. A Mr. Sneary of South Gate, California, seems to head the parade this time. He has endeared himself to a number of us here by his fantastic talent for strategic misspelling.

He also makes sense most of the time, which few of our other correspondents seem to be able to do (as if they cared!). At any rate, we would rather be dead than alter a letter of his deathless prose.

Deathless prose, here goes.

THE SOUTH GATE GATE by Rick Sneary

Dear Editor: You Big Fat Likeable Slob. Why did you print my letter in the June issue of TWS? The whole point of it was the mess the Reader Speaks was in, and you fixed that up the issue before. Well thanks anyway. And I want you to know that this months R-S was the best in maney a issue. Yaa, it may well be the best you ever had. Any cuting you did wasn't notable to me.

The Moorehead-Brown fued seems to be starting off very nicely. I'm for Alvin. He soulds good, and I agree, the few femms that write in all say the same thing. And only one of all of them is to my knowledge a active fan. And besides, its fun to be a exhibitionist, if you don't over do. OK, who'll take a swipe at me now?

It's nice to hear from all thos British fans. Wish they would talk about the mag tho, instead of putting in free ads. Not that I blame them. I'd hate to be with out sf mags like they were.

A letter from Ebey! Ohh wellcome oh lost one! Good point there George.

If you could ever be talked into giving something to the letter writers beside words, I suggest you give Burgess the whole mag. I'll not go in over my head, but heres hoping some one answers him.

Now the meat of the issue, namely the stories. Leinster was good, that is all. Fitzgerald's "Gregory" becomes more revolting as time goes own. It's well written, but no one could be that stupid and yet that smart.

The Big Night by Hastings (he is new isn't he?) made up for them. I started reading it twice. Both times it appeared to be a reather hum-drum space tale. Finely I read father, and it got better, tell by the end it had me speechless. Was this really "blood-&-science, TWS" I was reading. Why the heros really were alive, and they didn't save a world. Not even a little one. Just a old space ship. It was really wonderfull. More of the same, srom the same by all means.

The short subjects were even better than usual. **THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS** and **A HIGH IN TIME** were enough to gladen the harts of a O'Henry

fan even. And both fooled me. As friend Van Couvering would say, Sturgeon's story "had a neat old ending."

FROM BEYOND THE STARS. Hahahaha. Except for the "Bud Gregoryish" dingus it was good. I like stories about fans. Even 10 year old ones. (Oh yes. Some one wrote and said I sounded middleaged. Well I'm not. I'm 19. I write like I do because Asthma has kept me out of school.)

YOU ARE FORBIDDEN. Very well written with a good, and fairly new plot idea. I'd hate like—to know my future. It would take all the fun out of it. And as for knowing when you are going to die. Neaver.

Your reprint idea *sounds* good, but I'm not sure how it will work. Off hand I can think of little that would go well in the pros. It just isn't slanted that way.

Say, Marchioni sure made a mistake on pages 66-7. The story said that both cars were on the wrong side of the road, and rattletrap swerved father out. Yet in the picture they are both on the *right* side of the road. Or is Marchioni English and use to riding on the left side?—2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California.

Don't mean to wax personal, Rick, but I notice you managed to spell "Big Fat Likeable Slob" well enough. Thanks for the one adjective and it's a good thing we are not particularly sensitive about our weight.

As for your Gregory *filet de boeuf bor-goyne*, we have already done our best to come up with an answer. You guys are always trying to take the joy out of life. Somehow the idea of a social ignoramus fooling around with atomic piles et cetera is enough to keep anyone from sitting back to take things easy.

You aren't the only one worried about our fanzine contest. So far much of the material sent in reads like stuff out of a grade school quarterly.

KISS FROM CANADA

by R. R. Anger

Dear Editor: The June 1947 issue to TWS is, in my humble opinion one of the greatest issues of TWS ever printed and one of the greatest of any mag. You have my thanks and admiration for a really thrilling issue. Of all the TWS's I have read only the Summer 1945 ish with "The World-Thinker" classic by Jack Vance, "Things Pass By" by Murray Leinster, "The Purple Dusk" by Leslie Northern, "Percy the Pirate" by Henry Kuttner, "The Deconventionalizers" by Edmond Hamilton and "The Shadow Dwellers" by Frank Belknap Long, could come up to the June 1947 one. It is significant to me at least that one author, Murray Leinster, contributed three stories which helped make those two issues the finest in my opinion. He is one of the real giants of sf.

With such a great issue it is too bad we could not have a decent cover but that is mere trivia compared to the superb stories.

For my money, "The Big Night" by Hudson Hast-in his readers' heads, but "The Big Night" is a wonderful narrative of the things that would happen as events began to lead up to Murray Leinster's "The Disciplinary Circuit" future. That is, if matter-transmission really began to come in and space travel began to go out until we have The Starshine alone left.

Leinster painted the picture and implanted the idea in his readers' heads, but "The Big Night" is a wonderfully gripping story of how that change would affect people. Nothing is more true than what Mr. Hastings said in his Meet the Author article, "people are what make a story".

I remember that there was quite an argument in The Viz a while ago as to whether sf was literature or not and Chad Oliver with his usual clear thinking came up with the query, "how can we tell if sf is literature or not when we don't know what literature

is because there aren't any rules to define it" or something to that effect—well, perhaps the above quotation from Mr. Hastings is the answer to "what is literature?"

Then, in second place, we find a story that is as short as it is great. Theodore Sturgeon's "The Sky Was Full of Ships". He is one of those rare geniuses who can write a leisurely worked-out long story and then write a perfect short like this with a complete picture of plot, characterization, and idea combined with a terrific punch and a lovely style—all in six pages.

"From Beyond the Stars", by Will F. Jenkins, "The Nameless Something", by William Fitzgerald, "A Hitch in Time", by James MacCreigh, "You Are Forbidden", by Jerry Shelton and "The Boomerang Circuit", by Murray Leinster complete an issue that simply is beyond description.—320 Highland Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario.

You seem to have described it pretty well at that, Ronald. And thanks—we have nothing more to say.

WHAT? NOTHING AT ALL?

by Norman Spiere

Dear Editor: I agree with Ron Garth's closing statements contained in his letter to the last issue of this magazine (Apr.). Therefore to be different, I will break a life-long pledge of writing to Thrilling Wonder Stories by not writing.—Therefore I have nothing to say!... Satisfied?—343 Madison Avenue, Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Satisfied? Perfectly, Norman. We're even considering running across the river to light a flamboy in Amboy.

THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL RIDES AGAIN

by Michael Wigodsky

Dear Sir: Congratulations! The June TWS is superb! THE BOOMERANG CIRCUIT: good, but I'm glad this series is ended.

THE BIG NIGHT: an interplanetary, but what a difference! This really gives you something to think about!

THE NAMELESS SOMETHING: I hope this series never ends!

THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS: the best story in the issue.

A HITCH IN TIME: Horrific, to say the least! FROM BEYOND THE STARS: The worst story in the magazine, but it is a classic!

YOU ARE FORBIDDEN: Superb! Ed, I love you!—San Antonio, Texas.

We thought since cutting h--l out of the letters in the April (?) issue of TWS that we would only be wearing briefs—now we discover that we're still getting them through the mail. But not for long. A number of one and two volume screeds lie immediately ahead of us.

MORE LIKE IT—OR MERELY MORE OF IT?

by Johnnie Marvin

Dear Editor: Recently I bought my first TWS in years, frankly, and my acquaintance with the mag during that time has been limited to an occasional short story read at a friend's house. I enjoyed those I read, but didn't think of TWS as publishing quite the type of thing I go for. Imagine my surprise to find it

now easily the best all-around sf. mag being printed, bar none. You have my sincere congratulations on the progress you've made in all departments: stories, art, and features.

The best story was the only one of the three long pieces not named on the cover. *The Big Night* was magnificent. An excellent concept in the title, an excellent use of it in the yarn, and excellent writing generally. The whole really had the "feel" of merchant marine sailing, and the "feel" of space as I've always imagined it. Hastings, it seems to me, could hit the sickle easily—but I hope he sticks with us.

The Boomerang Circuit was just fair, its interest lying in the crumbs of super-science scattered throughout. Jenkins did much better in *From Beyond the Stars*, second best story in the book. *The Sky was Full of Ships* and *You Are Forbidden!* were also good, as was *The Nameless Something*, although this one was just a trifle obvious. The only poor story was *A Hitch in Time*—a perfect target for Ebey!

The art-work was quite satisfactory, except for Marchioni. The cover: well, if we can't have space scenes, give us pretty girls every time. Good enough.

I'd like to add my say to the controversy over *The Reader Speaks*. Although most fans are content, a few seem to think they have lost something. Well, maybe they have—though I am of the opinion that what they lost was not very worthwhile—but have they stopped to consider what they have now? Your letter section, beyond question, is what the fans have been yelling for in every mag under the sun—and never getting.

Fans have always wanted long letter sections. Yours is long. Fans have always wanted the editor to answer their specific questions and comments. You do. Fans have always wanted a letter section in which the editor is friendly to those who merit it, and tough with those who merit that. You are.

Well then, Sarge! What more could you do—with the possible exception of offering free lifetime subscriptions for every letter printed? It's up to the readers now. And for those who long for Xeno, they don't know what they're talking about anyway. If they did, they'd know that Xeno is actually the same thing that we know as varnish remover. If they get full of varnish remover and read the letter section, the effect will be the same as reading a letter section full of Xeno. Try it and see.

A few individual comments are called for. William Bender Jr., writes a good letter. Personally, as long as they don't interfere with the sense of a story, the more boners an author makes, the better I like it. It's fun to spot them. Yes, I like to pick out "movie boners," too. Ebey: the "matter-transmitter that receives itself" is not so very different from the mule that follows a carrot that is really being held by someone riding on his back (or don't you read the Katzenjammers?). Why not? As for the man falling in love with a juke box; heck, I knew a man once who fell in love with a kitchen sink. He finally drowned while crooning sweet nothings in its faucet.

Mr. Gene A Hyde, here is your answer. (The question, if anyone has forgotten, is are our minds and bodies two separate entities?) It is probably more complicated than you expected, but I can prove it. You see, our minds are separate entities, but our bodies are not. I know this may sound confusing at first, perhaps even impossible. But consider: people have lost their minds—but did you ever hear of anyone losing his body?

Gluckman logical? Read that last paragraph again. To me he just sounds mixed up—or doesn't he know what "latter" means? As for my semi-namesake, Marvin Maxwell, why doesn't he write a letter describing and rating the stories (to himself, if he's afraid you won't print it), and when he reads other people's comments, he can compare them with his own.

But that, of course, would end his confusion. And I'm not in favor of ending confusion. Confusion makes people think, keeps them on their toes, makes them enjoy life, makes them watchful (hence wary of dictators and Martians). Viva confusion!—916 Elizabeth Street, Schenectady, New York.

What more could we offer—well, Johnnie, why don't you drop around and pick up your check . . . and watch it bounce. . . .

For the rest, we should like to know a lot more about your friend of the kitchen sink

. . . it wasn't Ted Cook's Genevieve, by any chance? Yours for bigger and better confusion, or any other Chinese prophet.

ALL BEMMED UP AND GOING NOPLACE

by John Grossman

Dear Editor: A new T.W.S. is out, the fans are licking their chops, and I am anxious to get on with the dissecting. I am notorious for telling adventurous stories, so grab a stink bomb and don't be afraid to stop me if you've heard this one. (Wait boys—give me a chance—I haven't even started yet!)

(We've heard it—Editor.)

I read the stories with fascination—all about rockets, disciplinary circuits, planets, monsters, etc. Sounds just like my home planet—planet, I mean, (Darn my 6th dimensional accent) Unthinkingly I rated the stories: *THE BOOMERANG CIRCUIT*—This story overpowered me, I enjoy any Kim Rendell stories. Any more??? *THE BIG NIGHT*—Didn't seem to strike home satisfactory, but it will pass. *THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS*—(Gad, what a long title) I liked this story quite a bit, as I do all stories with endings that kind of chill you. *A HITCH IN TIME*—Oh man, what a story! That ending jolted me no end. *THE NAMELESS SOMETHING*—Bud Gregory is kinda good—more. *FROM BEYOND THE STARS*—Not a bad story—that character in the television screen in the illustration resembles me quite a bit—we must get acquainted sometime. *YOU ARE FORBIDDEN!*—This story has quite a new idea in it, not bad.

Now for the illustrations, says I, chuckling fiendishly to myself. Surprise! They were all good! Tell Napoli to make his pictures a little more distinct. Who did the pictures for *YOU ARE FORBIDDEN* and *FROM BEYOND THE STARS*? I must have this information for my files. I notice you're trying to have either Stevens or Finlay illustrate the lead novels—good! Bergey slipped on the cover a little because the girl is not too pretty—too big a nose. There I've said all that and I'm glad!—1037 West 18th, Des Moines, Iowa.

Sorry to cut that big hunk out of your mis-sive, brother Grossman, but it was a little too Bemmy for reproduction here—much as we like BEMS, at least as Astarita portrayed them for *FROM BEYOND THE STARS*. We don't think the nose Bergey put on Dona was oversized at all . . . it had character! No less.

NOTE FROM THE DOWNEY BARD

by John Van Couvering

Dear Editor: Spring has sprung, Fall has fell, TWS is here, and better than usual. Cover: a usual Bergey . . . fairly good. A usual Bergey. The boy really has a tan, don't he? Must have been in California.

THE BOOMERANG CIRCUIT is third of an excellent trilogy . . . or is trilogy the word for a three-man biography? Nordhoff and Hall write trilogies, I know. Oh well. Kim Rendell isn't too good as a real-life character, nor are most of the others in the series, but the story reeks . . . fairly reeks . . . with action, drummy, and high Barbaree.

THE BIG NIGHT was very hotcha la cucaracha, kitchy-kitchy-koo, WHEEEEEEEEE Well, anyhow, it was high-grade science-fiction, no love uninterest, and well, well! written.

Sturgeon's yarn was excellent . . . and that title! *THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS* . . . !

A HITCH IN TIME . . . cute play on words thar, by the way. Wow, what a punch! Geezo . . . Imagine the way poor old Tommy Rot or whoever he was felt when he found out that he blown the stuffin' out of his planet, knocked off his girl and family and wiped

out all his chances of returning in one swat.

THE NAMELESS SOMETHING was humorous, entertaining, thrilling and all other over-used hack phrases in one glawriuss swipe. Bud Gregory is most certainly a character . . . Dr. Murfree is a little obscure, tho . . . but what I like is the neeto way ole Bud goes moaning thru traffic in a jalop goin' a hundred ten per just like that. And in Los Angeles . . . !

FROM BEYOND THE STARS was a little over-worked as a plot . . . in fact, decidedly in need of a rest. But I liked the way it was handled. . . . I didn't realize I wasn't supposed to enjoy it until I was done reading it. But one thing . . . why, if it was so simple for Junior to get the vernier settings on the television set, couldn't the prof do it? Or did the prof realize the enormity of the job, and not even try? Hum?

Pics were good, except Marchioni. Who is this new guy? Why doesn't he sign his work? It's new . . . it's artistic . . . and it's distinctive.

The quality of the whole ish was remarkable, and to tie up a straight shot of super stories, we have YOU ARE FORBIDDEN! Shelton managed to pull us into a cute little abattoir and leave us there among the blood and guts of the former victims. Now, if you will tell me what that means, I'll go on. . . . It was really some trap that Predikograph pulled.

You went mad because the machine predicted you would go mad because you went mad because the machine predicted you would. See? It's lovely. And better still, there's no solution. . . . Brrr, I give myself the creeps.

The Sarge is gone . . . who are we to mourn? Although he did a lot to pep up the column, now that we readers are doing the pepping-up (ahem) he can drop into a Xeno vat and stay there. The new ed's just as good . . . just as funny . . . only he doesn't go around cursing by Green Space-Devils and Warting people's ears and Snagging their teeth. I bet your office staff welcomed the change, too. And his poems are worse, if anything.

So an ode to the new Editor
Whose poetry is no beditor
And whose XENO has drained out the keg:
Who we know will be nicer
'Less you want a pie, sir,
In the face, from the fans who used to beg
For a spot in the letter column.
So keep up your mood solemn
Or we'll have to take you down a peg
And make you read of Wart-Ears
And things of that sort; years
Behind their time; so shake a leg!

And no three-line squibs neath my letter this time!
Say something besides "hubba bubba hubba!" like you did in SS last ish. Dog!—902 North Downey Avenue, Downey, California.

No three-line hubbas, eh? Very well, my scanless chum, you asked for it with electric light bulbs, used tulips or something. . . .

*Leave us pluck this Downey Bard
And leave his spirit no more hovering
We'll pluck his feathery innards, pard
And use them for our winter covering—
covering, Couvering. . . . ?*

Hope four lines will satisfy you this time, John.

HEBER WEBER HUBBA HUBBA by Wallace Weber

Dear Editor: While strolling down the street, I happened to see the June issue of Thrilling Wonder Stories. Following tradition, I fished fifteen cents from a nearby cripple and carried the mag home after paying the gent behind the counter my hard-earned money. Dragging out my typewriter, I wrote you a letter telling how good your publication was and then prepared to read the thing.

Up until that time everything was going according

to custom. I had suspected nothing out of the ordinary even after seeing the exceptional quality of the cover. Even after reading the novel, I passed it off with, "Leinster always writes good stories," and let it go at that. However, I promptly tore up my letter after reading "The Big Night."

"They must have gone nuts!" I said to myself (a sign that I wasn't too sane myself), "If this happens once more, the fans are going to expect it to happen every time. Then they will run out of good stories and. . . ." Trying hard to keep the gruesome thought of what happens to the editor of a magazine that has failed to pacify the fans out of my mind, I read the rest.

Editor, old chap, you have really put out a magazine there. Despite the fact that you will suffer a horrible fate in the future, I am glad you did it. Even the short stories were above average in scope and writing.

The readers' letter section hasn't changed much since the last issue. I am glad about that too. Only I see where England isn't as well supplied with imaginative fiction as we are. I am glad to see letters from that country, though.

Say, how about modifying Guerry's idea of a hack-letter contest by letting the fans vote on who the contestants should be? Then you could take the ten or twenty persons with the most votes and let them write with no limit on the length of the letters.

The best one could be published to satisfy us hack-loving fans. One contest a year should be enough. So what if it does work you to death adding up votes and reading thirty-page letters? Didn't you let yourself wide open by giving the address we should send our stories to?

One last request. Wouldn't you consider changing the name of your magazine or at least print it in a simpler and less colorful form?—Box No. 558, Ritzville, Washington.

Skipping for the nonce, your idea of a hack letter contest (brrrr! It's chilly in here after that one) let us take up your final suggestion.

So you want us to change our name . . . well, it's an idea. How about THRILLING BLUNDER STORIES? Or, more simply, THRILLING BLUNDER? Or better yet, UNTHRILLING BLUNDER . . . or UN-BLILLING THUNDER. . . . At any rate, Wallace, this should give you some idea of how complex such an apparently simple task could get. Final happy thought—why not print a cover of an all-black spaceship against an all-black sky and have the coal-sack wipe out the title completely? Put it to a vote with yourself and then bury your face in the pillow and smother in peace!

WRONG KENNEDY AGAIN by Jim Kennedy

Dear Editor: I'm back to tell you what I think of you. No! on second thought I'd better not. If I said all that I might get arrested.

The cover on the June issue of T.W.S. was the usual Bergey style—putrid. Of the inside pics the best one was on page 17. It reminds me of the old style science fiction.

As time goes on, the styles of writing change, some for the better and some for the worse. The style of science fiction that you publish now is all right. But personally I think science fiction was at its best back in 1937 and '38.

Getting back to the current issues, the best story of course was "The Nameless Something". It was better than the last Bud Gregory story and I hope the author keeps up the good work.

"The Boomerang Circuit" ranks second. It was an interesting story but the best Kim Rendell novel was "The Manless Worlds".

Coming into the homestretch for a slow third was

"The Big Night."

The short stories were all poor but the best of them was "You Are Forbidden". "A Hitch In Time" was next with "The Sky Was Full Of Ships" close behind and "From Beyond The Stars" last.

Going over "The Reader Speaks," I find you are being plagued by another Kennedy. The Kennedy Klan is marching against you. Besides me there are two Joe Kennedys (by the way, what ever happened to the other Joe Kennedy?) and now this newcomer, Casey Kennedy. And to top things off you are soon to hear from my brother Paul.

I see also that you are starting another contest of some sort, though as yet I still don't understand it. I might like to get into this writing business but more-n-likely I'd get turned down by all the big companies and wind up with a hobby collecting rejection slips. But if I was to start off in one of the small concerns I might have a chance. But the sixty-four dollar question is who do I have to contact and where? If you could answer this for me, I might enter this racket.

Well seeing as how I've caused enough trouble I guess I'd better be shoving off. But always remember: I'LL BE BACK (horrible thought isn't it?)—373 Hamilton Street, Redding, California.

You want to begin collecting your rejection slips, Jim? Write to the editor of any magazine that suits your fancy. By law, on the fine print of the masthead, the address of the editorial office must be given. Thereafter, you're on your own.

REXWARD THE COURSE OF BEMPIRE. . .

by Rex E. Ward

Dear Editor: I'm a little late this time, so here are a few quick ratings on the June issue:

Something out of the ordinary here. A short story taking first-place honors! And against tough competition too! At any rate, "You are Forbidden," by Jerry Shelton was really one of the finest shorts I've ever read. It had a new idea, nicely handled. Jerry can really bang 'em out when he wants! Give it a 3.5 and my congratulations!

(2) The Boomerang Circuit, Murray Leinster—3.0—Very good. The best of the three Rendell novels, I'd say. But, Murray, for goodness's sake, don't tell me this is the last one of the series! This yarn just screams for another sequel.

(3) Hmmm, this is tough, but I guess I'll give it to James MacCreigh for "A Hitch in Time." I'm a nut for time stories, anyway. It took some time for the paradox to hit me, but when it did, it *did*! I've read much better, but a passable yarn anyway. 2.5.

(4) From Beyond The Stars, Will F. Jenkins—2.5—Not up to your usual standard of excellence, Will-Murray. Readable, but when compared with "A Logic Named Joe" and some of those, it just doesn't stand up very well.

(5) "The Big Night," Hudson Hastings, and "The Sky was Full of Ships" and "The Nameless Something," all about even, with 2.5 apiece. The first was a rather strange story. Started out nicely, then let down a little. The plot was old, the writing fair, combining to make a readable yarn—but it should've been better. "Ships" was so-so; Ted can do better, much better.

The Bud Gregory yarn, by your "find" would have rated third, maybe second, if only it had been the type of story I like. Unfortunately, for Mr. Fitzgerald, it wasn't. Namely, the remarkable hillbilly-hero. I've never cared for this sort of thing. In fact only one author has ever made me like a character of this sort, and that was Nels Bond and his "Horsensense Hank". However, William can really write, that's evident, and if he'd just once, for me, lay off that kind of yarn, he'd rank high among my favorites.

I think your new idea is swell; I only regret that I can't enter it this year. Next year, though, I can, because I am now publishing a fanzine. Watch for it. It will be called "2000 A. D.—The Fanzine of the Future." A nice mimeographed job—subscriptions being

taken now; 10c per copy, 3 for 25c, 6 for 50c, or, if you want to be really economical, 15 for \$1.00.

With that, I shall leave you, with one last plea for Polton Cross. Where's he been the last few issues? Oh yes!—the next issue looks great—I'll be waiting! —428 Main Street, El Segundo, California.

Okay, Rex, we'll look for the fanzine with sharpened knife. So you don't like Bud the Gregory, hmmm? That again is a matter of taste—and more power to yours . . . if any.

SUPERBA—THAT'S US

by Norman Fredricks

Dear Editor: I was introduced to your magazine a few months ago by the fellow who used to live at this address (Fred Goldberg). I received from him the major part of his collection. After reading the 200 or so magazines, I now feel able to comment on the present day printing.

Your last issue was superb. The RENDELL and GREGORY series are great. I hope that "The Boomerang Circuit" is not the end of the former series. I don't particularly like world savers, but this variety I'll take anytime.

As for GREGORY, he can go on forever as far as I'm concerned (but must he always run away?). The author's ability to contrast events which are major and minor and yet which still lead to the same end is beautiful. More strength to Fitzgerald.

"The Big Night," "The Sky Was Full of Ships," and the other shorts were old in plot but refreshingly presented.—2238 East 24th Street, Brooklyn 29, New York.

So you had to read 200 mags before you dared give us a crit. Well, in view of your result we wish certain other fans would follow your practise. Yes, the Gregory character, as conceived, must always run away from the life which he also commands the means to master.

Like the Missouri mule of legendary fame, he just don't give a hoot until a problem is brought home to him in the closest, most personal manner. In view of his Great Smokies background of indolent loneliness and illiteracy, how could he be any other way?

MIXED GREENS

by Calvin S. Martin

Dear Editor: I have just finished reading my June issue of TWS and will now give my criticisms, and approvals (the latter free of charge). The stories are in order as to what I thought of them:

1.—THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS—Stories such as these take a trip around my head before leaving.

2.—A HITCH IN TIME—Something along the line of the first story.

3.—THE NAMELESS SOMETHING—Atomic bombs destroying the world are getting too common to be good reading. Bud Gregory is the one thing that saves this story and that only because he is unique. As far as I know this is the second story that he has been in. Unless this coming third story in the August issue is good in more ways than Bud Gregory it will be one story too many of that series.

4.—another short story FROM BEYOND THE STARS—New type that I have not read much about before (the boy and his comics, I mean).

5.—THE BIG NIGHT—truthfully (understand, no lies) I can not say that I like this novelet too well.

6.—YOU ARE FORBIDDEN—too many stories like this will scrap TWS.

7.—THE BOOMERANG CIRCUIT—Privately I think that this is a little better than the sixth story but I

am putting it last to teach Murray Leinster a lesson (no hope. The three Kim Rendell novels I have read have gone from fair to poor. My advice to Leinster (do not weep over it) is to scrap Kim Rendell and get another hero and setting.

The cover is fair but could be better. As I am no expert (hear, hear) I will not tell you in what ways it could be improved so that both you and I will be left guessing.

Now to tell about myself (boo). I have been reading TWS and any other STF I could get hold for a year (that is a good fellow) and the first STF magazine that I ever bought was TWS (more applause). That always happens does it not? Well I guess I can sign off by saying that I am looking forward to the next issue of TWS.—R. R. 8, St. Mary's, Ontario, Canada, EARTH.

Frankly, in view of your opinion of the June issue, we can't for the life of us see why.

WEAKEST LIN

by Lin Carter

Dear Sir: The June issue was something new in sciencefiction; that is, an issue without a single story in it that I disliked even slightly. Incredible. First the cover—which was good. Quite good. I might even say, very good. The inside pics were a different matter. Except for Lawrence and Astarita (?) they were awful. Marchioni's efforts for THE BIG NIGHT were just about the worst ones he's done yet.

The third novel in Leinster's Kim Rendell Trilogy was excellent. Let's have some more in this series. THE BIG NIGHT was also excellent. I don't recognize Hastings, but his yarn had a flavor of the "old days" (that sounds like I had a beard down to my knees, doesn't it?). His story gave me an idea: granted that matter transmitting is the logical successor to rocket travel, WHAT is the successor to matter transmitting? Anybody have an idea?

THE SKY WAS FULL OF SHIPS and A HITCH IN TIME were pretty good. I love stories with a punch-line ending. THE NAMELESS SOMETHING was the best Bug Gregory novelet to date. This had a fine quality of suspense; if it had been five pages longer, I would have had ulcers. FROM BEYOND THE STARS and YOU ARE FORBIDDEN were short and sweet. Good pics.

The Reader Speaks (he should have laryngitis by now) wasn't so hot this ish. Guy Gluckman—you have an idea there, fella. How about some inside pics by Bergey, Ed? George Ebey—funniest letter I've read for many a moon! Burgess' letter was good too.—865 - 20th Ave. So., St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

Okay, so you didn't get ulcers. We don't care, after your comment on our masterful, supercolossal TRS.

As to your interesting query about a successor to matter transmission, it brought us up with what may well be a logical answer. Wouldn't it be mere transmission of soul and mind without need to travel physically at all? The Hindus claim to have already approached something close to it in their Nirvana.

Or perhaps something along the lines of Jack Vance's World Thinker, who could create his own universes might be it. We wouldn't pretend to know, but it opens up the field for some interesting speculation. Certainly "pure" science as must ultimately be practised when practical science has reached the limits of galactic problems cuts awfully close to philosophy.

Ultimately, we suppose, psychologists,

working from the skin toward the brain, and philosophers and metaphysicians, working from the soul outward, must meet. That will be the day. . . .

LITTLE BROWN MUG

by Guerry Campbell Brown

Dear Editor: Ah me, why don't I ever get tired of writing letters to prozines. I guess I just like to see my flowing prose and witty remarks in print. I also like to show my letters to all my friends, but they don't seem to appreciate them. I've only shown them about fifty times to each of my pals. They seem to shun me for some strange reason, whenever I come around.

As for the stories, I'll use my null grading system for the stories. You know, a story that rates no nulls is a classic, one, excellent, two or three, fairly good, four, bad, five or more, aren't fit to be in print. Ratings for this issue:

The Boomerang Circuit—* A very good story. The only thing is, it seems to me that people would be a good deal more changed in mannerisms, customs, ways of living, etc. Otherwise excellent. The whole trilogy has been very good, to say the least.

The Big Night—** The story was very good, except for the ending. I greatly dislike stories that finish up like that, where the main character sticks to his old traditions, even tho those traditions are outworn and pointless. Otherwise a fine novelet.

The Nameless Something—* Fitzgerald is one swell writer! He really has a "neet tuch," as Sneyar would have it. I enjoy the way Gregory does the most complicated scientific feats without any trouble at all. By all means, MORE!

The Sky Was Full of Ships—call it half a null. I have NEVER read a better short in any sfzine (or fantasy or weird, for that matter!) What a punch that last sentence had!

A Hitch in Time—** A good short. Nothing super, but interesting.

From Beyond the Stars—*** Rather too corny to be as effective as it might have been. Personally, I'd rather have seen the BEM cause the little boy to destroy the world.

You Are Forbidden!—** Good, but I could see what the ending was going to be. Well told, tho.

Artwork: Cover—** Accurate, but not particularly good, otherwise. Where are all the BEMs? Maybe Earl K. has quit drinking.

Pgs. 11, 13, 17. Who did these pictures? They look very much like the work of the artist Lawrence. He's done some very good work. (It IS Lawrence, isn't it?) I'm glad to see him in TWS. I particularly liked the one on page 17. Very good. About 1½ nulls apiece.

Pg. 38-39 **** Ugh! Marchioni.

Pg. 55 **** Not very clear.

Pg. 61 Ditto.

Pg. 66-67 *** A better sample of the mad artist's handiwork, but still just mediocre.

Pg. 82 *** Nice looking BEM. Otherwise not too good.

Pg. 89 *** About average.

The Reader Speaks * As always, very high class. Your new policy of cutting letters so that more people can get in is really paying off. Rex Ward, Patch, Brown (Alvin R., not me), everybody had a really good letter. As concerns my letter, well, I still say I could have done better in my first letter. However, I have a vague plan in the back of my mind, namely one of putting out a small zine devoted entirely to hack letters, poetry, and similar material, where all the frustrated hacks can unburden their pent-up souls.—P. O. Box 1467, Delray Beach, Florida.

Yes, that was Lawrence, but his real name, as we have repeatedly told you lads and lasses, is Verne S. Stevens. He took the Lawrence pseudonym merely to avoid confusion with his son, also an artist. Considerate pappy, what?

One other question, Guerry—you speak of a corner in which fans can unburden their

pent-up souls. Who pent them up anyway and what are they pent in? We'd really like to know, especially as self-expression (supposedly a release for that pent-up sensation) seems to be the long suit for almost all fans.

A STANZA OF HIS OWN by Greg Cranston

Dear Editor: The new feature planned for TWS is an excellent idea. Besides increasing the magazine's interest, you may promote hidden talent. Some fanzines may now be able to obtain material from hitherto inactive subscribers. A fanzine running largely pro talent may increase its amateur work so as to compete for entry.

Though not quite up to par with some of the work of early this year, the novel was readable, and the novelets proved entertaining. The shorts are better than average, but there is an undercurrent of hack in some of them.

Where does one get the comics mentioned in "From Beyond the Stars?" They sound more interesting than some of the magazines I've read lately (no offense).

Since poem-writing is the fad now, (having replaced Xeno) I've decided to produce a stanza of my own:

Something has happened to magazine pics,
Something to startle the nation:
Bergey and Finlay have thrown out their tricks,
And now move in co-ordination.

—184 Glen Road, Hamilton, Ontario.

*Hope you're right about that feature, Greg
Though so far the issue's in doubt,
For rather than have the thing lay an egg
We'll boot the whole business right out.*

SUN SHINED by B. De Revere

Dear Editor: This issue of TWS must have been printed on Mercury.

The sun certainly shined upon it.

Fustly, let me state that I think it is the best single issue, (as far as stories go) of TWS that I have ever had the pleasure of reading.

THE BIG NIGHT by Hudson Hastings was a very readable and adult space opera and this in itself is quite remarkable as space operas so seldom are. Also, Sir Hastings' article in THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY was very entertaining.

As for the two other novelets, I don't know just what to say. The Bud Gregory series is somewhat annoying to me although I don't know exactly why. There seem to be something missing herein. What? Plot?

If this keeps up you'll have me pleading for TUBBY. And I hate TUBBY.

The shorts were all wonderful. Shelton's was probably the best, followed closely by MacCreigh, Sturgeon and Lienster. The Lienster novel was a very naughty thing to do to us fans.

This is the end of Kim Rendell, isn't it? You won't give us any more, will you? Of course not.

This new feature you've got planned sounds like a honey. I'm anxious to see it. You've got the most unique features of any STF mag and that's why, partly, as far as straight STF goes, you and STARTLING are tops.

I hate to say it, but Bergey did an unmentionable this time. And after those preceding covers. Oh well, no artist can be good all the time. Not even Finlay or Lawrence. It wasn't the art, it was the subject. There were plenty of passages in the stories that rated covers. Not this. No punch.

Thank you for printing my letter. But anent LOVECRAFT. What in the name of the 26 pink Deros do you mean by "too many adjectives?" Certainly Lovecraft used an abundance of adjs in his stories but read Poe's FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER sometime and you'll probably cuss Lovecraft

[Turn page]

NOW! Amazing New Comfort for Tender Gums and Loose False Teeth

TRY MY COMFORTING
PLASTIC "CUSHION"

SO WONDERFUL that it is SENT to YOU

ON APPROVAL!

TRY 7 DAYS FREE - BE DELIGHTED

or DON'T PAY - not a penny in advance!

Why Such Remarkable Relief?

My plate liner corrects loose or uneven fit by molding itself to every mouth crevice that should fit to your plates! Saliva toughens lining to firm "cushion" fit.

How Is It Different?

Its secret formula makes possible both durability and "cushion" effect. Users write us they have never found anything like it—a comforting, easy to use product that lasts from 3 months to a year—average cost less than 1 and 1/2¢ a day.

Why This Offer to New Users?

Results must seem almost like magic, or I couldn't promise you satisfaction before paying. Find out at my risk how you can get comfort—also save money. Nothing like it in drug stores—Order direct (\$2 tube) DR. DAY'S, Dept. 3, 437 So. Hill St., Los Angeles 13, Calif.

**JUST SPREAD ON AT NIGHT—
Wake Up with a New, Snug Fit
for UPPERS or LOWER**



Simple
directions
tell you all
you need to know

THINK OF IT!

No more bother and expense of powders, pastes, or pads. A deluxe, resilient plastic—easy to use. No heating! Self-hardening. So durable it will not come off in cleaners, yet harmless to plates, because it can be removed. Tasteless! Odorless!

**Rush Coupon NOW!
7 day FREE trial**

Dr. Day's DENTAL PLATE LINER

Dept. 3, 437 S. Hill St. Los Angeles 13, Calif.

I want to try your plate liner on approval. If I am pleased, I will mail you \$2.00 in cash, money order, or check within 7 days. If I am not pleased, I am free to pay nothing, and will return remainder of tube instead of paying.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____

(Please Print Name and Address)

FREE ENLARGEMENT
of your Favorite Photo

FROM FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS

Just to get acquainted we will make a beautiful 5 x 7 enlargement of any picture or negative. Be sure to include color of hair, eyes and clothing and get our bargain offer for having your enlargement beautifully hand colored in oil and mounted in your choice of handsome frames. Limit 2 to a customer. Please enclose 10c to cover cost of handling and mailing each enlargement. Your original picture or negative will be returned with the FREE 5 x 7 enlargement postpaid. Act now! Offer limited to U.S.A.

HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS
 7021 Santa Monica Blvd., Dept. 346, Hollywood, Calif.

HORSE MASTERY!

A FINE HOBBY — A GREAT VOCATION!

"The EXPERT HORSEMAN"



FREE BOOK — Tells how you can learn to:
 BREAK COLTS, GAIT SHOW HORSES, TRAIN
 RODEO, STOCK and RACE HORSES, BREAK BAD HABITS,
 HANDLE ANY HORSE, TRAIN CIRCUS TRICK HORSES. Write TODAY!

ANIMAL LOVERS ASSOCIATION
 BOX 74-137 TARZANA, CALIFORNIA

SUBSCRIBE
 TODAY
50¢
 One Year

LAW

STUDY AT HOME for PERSONAL SUCCESS
 and LARGER EARNINGS. 39 years expert in-
 struction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B.
 Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy pay-
 ment. C.T. Approved. Send for FREE BOOK.
AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
 Dept. 81T, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.



COMB-A-TRIM The New Quick Trimmer

Something New! Trim your hair with-
 out any experience. It's easy! The ex-
 cess hair comes off smoothly and easily
 by just pulling trimmer through hair
 like an ordinary comb. Save on hair-cut
 bills. . . Trim your own hair or the
 whole family's. Send 59c and your Comb-A-Trim
 will be sent at once, postpaid.

59¢

SPECIAL Send \$1.00 for
 OFFER 2 Comb-A-Trim Trimmers. Save 18c
2 for 1 5 Extra Blades (Year's Supply) **25¢**

COMB-A-TRIM CO., CAREW TOWER, Dept. L-50, Cincinnati, Ohio

Sterling Silver **SADDLE RING**

Authentic replica of championship rodeo
 saddle! Handsomely formed from solid
 Sterling Silver, by expert silver craftsmen.
 Men's, Women's, Children's styles.

SEND NO MONEY! Just clip ad and
 mail with name, address, ring style and
 size. Pay postman only \$4.95 (includes tax)
 plus postage, wear 5 days. If not delighted,
 return for full refund.

Arizona Craftsmen Dpt. 606H Omaha 2, Nebr.
 1904 Farmington

STOMACH ULCERS

Why suffer needlessly? You
 can get fast relief, know the
 joys of good health again
 quickly . . . with inexpen-
 sive, pleasant tasting Medi-
 cine Rock Mineral Water.
 This is nature's own remedy,
 discovered in the moun-
 tains of Southern Oregon.

Get relief with
**MEDICINE
 ROCK
 MINERAL
 WATER**

What it has done for
 others it can do for you!
 \$3.00 bottle. (Money back
 guarantee . . . Folder on
 request.) Medicine Rock
 Mineral Water Company,
 Dept. N, Shady Cove, Ore.

for his lack of descriptive merit! And everybody
 thinks *that's* a classic. Ha!

In reality, Howard Phillips Lovecraft is one of the,
 (I take that back, *THE*) *greatest* weird-fantasy
 author I have yet come across. He easily edges out
 Merritt, Smith, Keller, etc.

Who is this Wilkie Conner who calls Lovecraft's
 stories "morbid?" All good horror tales are at least
 a little morbid. Bradbury's weird shorts are morbid.
 And they are excellent. Ditto with Bloch.

Oh, certainly he wrote some poor yarns. Almost
 every fantasy author has. But the greatest per-
 centage of Lovecrafts were classics. A few being;
 THE OUTSIDER (I dare you to insult this.) THE
 DUNWHICH HORROR, etc.—356 St. Paul's Avenue,
 Stapleton 4, Staten Island, New York.

You are entitled to your opinion re Love-
 craft, B. (that initial sounds like a girl's
 name, doesn't it?). All we could offer is our
 own dissenting ditto, which have already
 offered ad nauseam.

However, your comparison to E.A. Poe
 brings up the interesting point that it is
 general and well-qualified editorial opinion
 today that this particular Poe would have
 more trouble getting a story accepted by a
 modern magazine than his grandson and
 namesake would of making the Princeton
 backfield, where he and his slue of brothers
 starred so brilliantly.

Poe, actually, was a primitive exploring a
 little-known field of literature (actually he
 explored several). As a primitive he de-
 serves full credit. But as a creator of clas-
 sics—heaven forfend. This tendency to con-
 fuse primitives which accomplish great pur-
 poses in their followers and classics which
 can stand eternally on their own literary
 legs is a common one, especially among
 pedants and those who cease reading after
 deriving their culture from pedants in school.

CHEER FOR SNEARY by Doc Hoyt

Dear Sir: First off, congratulations on the new de-
 partment! I am sure that all of organized Fandom
 will be tossing the orchids in your lap. For this
 single act, I will become a TWS apostle for life.
 Now, if you had trimmed edges, Finlay on the cover
 —but then, you can't do everything at once.

As concerns the June issue, the Reader Speaks,
 which I read first, was passing fair. The brightest
 spots were the letters from Merrie England. Fandom
 across the waters needs a good shot in the arm and
 seems about to get it. Sneary, with his unorthodox
 spelling, rates first place. Ward was interesting with
 his new rating system, in that he didn't utilize bot-
 tles, barrels or jugs. Concerning your reply to Mr.
 Ward's letter, your head *should* be bent—in embar-
 rassment. The February, '41 novel was by Barnes, and
 not a Carlyle-Quade opus. You should have dipped
 that poem in alcohol and left it there.

Before I get to the stories, I would like to obtain a
 little information. Now that "Sarge" has departed
 (or returned) to parts unknown, I hope that his policy
 of avoiding direct questions has gone with him. Any-
 way, who did the artwork on pages 82 and 89? Also,
 what about pix by Schomburg, Wesso and Murphy?
 Where are the novels by Jacobi and Simak which
 were promised in the December, 1939, issue?

Enough of questions, on to the ratings! Leinster's
 novel tops the longer stories, but his short is topped
 by Shelton's and by Sturgeon as well. Of late, your
 shorts (no pun intended) are more colorful than they
 have been for many months. Get Kuttner to turn out
 a few Pete Manx epics, some more GOOD fantasy

and (with Barnes) a few Carlyle-Quade yarns like the "Energy Eaters", and MOST of your fans will be happy.

On the whole, the present issue of TWS is at least as good as any that have been published this year and much better than most of the war rags. Keep up the improvements and we won't know the mag!—403 Second Avenue, Waterliet, N. Y.

Fair enough, Don. We'll answer your questions except for that about the Jacobi and Simak novels. Have a heart, babe. No one around here now remembers such editorial details, disasters or what have you today.

Your artist of pages 82 and 89 is two lads—both of them new. Astarita did the first, Napoli the latter. Both have possibilities. We're thinking of digging up some more BEM yarns just so Astarita can turn his imagination (and dry brush) loose. That really was a BEM, n'est-ce pas?

For the rest, we're doing the best we can with the writers, artists and stories available. Let's hope it gives rise to a minimum of reader anguish.

SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

by Pfc. Bob Luehr

Dear Editor: About two years ago or so, I was a very ardent SF fan or so I thought. I used to read TRS in every issue of TWS, and TEV in SS. That was when said features were still the Xeno-dripping drivel that they used to be. (I'll bet I get an argument on that.) I got fed up with that stuff and finally quit reading them.

The years passed (during which time I joined the Army) and then—I got the April issue of TWS and just for the fun of it I paged thru TRS, and Lo and Behold! What did I find? A brand new section. No more Xeno, wart-ears, or (so-called) space-lingo. I had to look at the cover to make sure I was really reading TWS.

I read it from start to finish and was pleased to find the old sloop gone. The letters of a few of the old diehards gave the story behind this sudden change. I was glad to see that the fact the Ye Olde Sarge was gone, but the friendly Editorial comments were still there but without the old Xeno-hangover attitude. So all I can say on that line is, KEEP IT UP!

Bergey's cover was good, as his covers have been for the past few issues. He still doesn't stick straight to the story, but the quality is improving, so it's okay. As for the stories, they were, to use an already overused word, superb, with one exception.

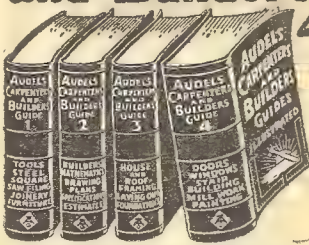
I think FROM BEYOND THE STARS was poor. Too juvenile. But the rest of them were great. I'll place goes to Leinster (Who else?) for his great third story in the Kim Rendell series. Will there be more (I hope.)? 2nd goes to THE NAMELESS SOMETHING. I hope that Fitzgerald's next one is as good.

3rd is Hastings' THE BIG NIGHT. He built a good yarn around the human emotions. Let's have more like it. The shorts were good with that one exception. With the type of stories you're now printing, you've risen to No. 1 on my SF Parade—Co. B. Ord. School Bn., Aberdeen Prov. Grds., Maryland Box No. 555.

We have a hunch our October issue (this one) should establish an all-time high for TWS. At any rate it is the strongest we have come up with in many a long and dreary moon. Maintaining the level is going to be tough, but the writers are still turning out improved stuff and the line-up of illustrators is improving.

[Turn page]

AUDELS Carpenters and Builders Guides 4 vols. \$6



Inside Trade Information for Carpenters, Builders, Joiners, Building Mechanics and all Woodworkers. These Guides give you the short-cut instructions that you want—including new methods, ideas, solutions, plans, systems and money saving suggestions. An easy progressive course for the apprentice and student. A practical daily helper and worker. Carpenters everywhere are using these Guides as a Helping Hand to Ease Work, Better Work and Better Pay. To get this assistance for yourself, simply fill in and mail the FREE COUPON below.

Inside Trade Information On:

How to use the steel square—How to file and set cases—How to build furniture—How to use a mitre box—How to use the chalk line—How to use rules and scales—How to make joints—Carpenters arithmetic—Solving mensuration problems—Estimating strength of timbers—How to set girders and sills—How to frame houses and roofs—How to estimate costs—How to build houses, barns, garages, bungalows, etc.—How to read and draw plans—Drawing up specifications—How to excavate—How to use setlines 12, 13 and 17 on the steel square—How to build joists and scaffolds—skylights—How to build stairs—How to put on interior trim—How to hang doors—How to lay floor boards—How to paint



THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 W. 23rd St., New York City

Mail Audels Carpenters and Builders Guides, 4 vols., on 7 days' free trial. If O.K. I will remit \$1 in 7 days, and \$1 monthly until \$6 is paid. Otherwise I will return them. No obligation unless I am satisfied.

Name.....
Address.....
Occupation.....
Business..... PAL

BE A DETECTIVE
WORK HOME or TRAVEL. Experience unnecessary.
DETECTIVE Particulars FREE. Write to
GEO. R. H. WAGNER, 125 W. 86th St., N. Y.

SHINE WITHOUT 'POLISH'

New invention! • Sells Like Wild



Replaces messy pastes, liquids. Simply glide over shoes—and presto! you have a lustrous, long-lasting shine. No mess. No muss. No soiled hands. Clean. Handy. WORKS LIKE MAGIC! For Men's, Women's and Children's Shoes. Low priced. Lightning seller!

SAMPLES FOR AGENTS Sample offer sent immediately to all who send name at once. A penny postal will do. SEND NO MONEY—just your name. KRISTEE CO., 1477 Bar Street, AKRON, OHIO

WANT A



GOVERNMENT JOB
START \$1,756 TO \$3,021 YEAR

Veterans Got Preference. Many 1948 examinations expected. Prepare NOW! Mail coupon today. SURE.

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, Dept. L94, ROCHESTER 4, N. Y.
Sirs: Rush without charge, (1) 32-page book with list of U. S. Government jobs. (2) Tell me how to get one of these jobs.

Coupon Name.....
Address..... Vet?

**\$10.15
FOR ONE
DRAWING**



Be an ARTIST!

—Train at Home in Your Spare Time

The fascinating field of Art offers commercial opportunities to men and women. **COMMERCIAL ART, CARTOONING, DESIGNING** all in one complete course. We prepare you step-by-step. Trained Artists are capable of earning \$30, \$60, \$75 a week. Colorful **FREE BOOK**, "Art for Pleasure and Profit—" describes course and method of instruction. **TWO ART OUTFITS** included with training. **STATE AGE.**

Course approved under G. I. Bill.
**WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART, Studio 4610 H
 1115—15th St., N. W. WASHINGTON 5, D. C.**

**FREE
BOOK
gives
details**

RHEUMATISM

ARTHRITIS-NEURITIS-SCIATICA

If you suffer the agonizing pains of these diseases when the usual remedies have failed, learn about a new trustworthy, modern, non-surgical treatment method. This marvelous treatment is completely explained in the **Ball Clinic's FREE Book**. Write today. No obligation.

BALL CLINIC Dept. 504, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

LOCKSMITHING Complete Up-to-date

and Key Making! COURSE . . . How to pick locks, decide, make master-keys, repair, install, service, etc. 53 easy illustrated **SELF-INSTRUCTION LESSONS** for every handy man, home-owner, carpenter, mechanic, etc. Satisfaction guaranteed. Send for Success-catalogue **FREE**. **NELSON CO., 1139 S. Wabash, Dept. 06, Chicago 5**

PICTURE RING \$1.

Exquisite Picture Ring—made from any photo. **SEND NO MONEY!** Mail photo with paper strip for ring-size. Pay postman only \$1 plus postage. Hand tinted &c extra. Photoreturnd with ring. Money back guarantee. **SEND PHOTO AND RING SIZE NOW!**

PICTURE RING CO. Dept. R-26, CINCINNATI 2, Ohio

LAW

STUDY AT HOME for PERSONAL SUCCESS and LARGER EARNINGS. 39 years expert instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. G.I. Approved. Send for **FREE BOOK**. **AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW** Dept. 81T, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

GUM GRIPPER

Tightens FALSE TEETH or NO COST

Lasts from 3 to 6 Months!

New discovery makes loose dental plates fit snug and comfortable for months—almost like having your own teeth again. For uppers and lowers. **Easy to Apply at Home** . . . Simply squeeze some "GUM GRIPPER" evenly on your denture, put plate in your mouth where it sets and hardens in few minutes. No heat—no fuss—no muss. Will not harm any denture.

SEND NO MONEY . . .

Order a tube today, for only \$1.00 (deposit with your own postman). Each application of "GUM GRIPPER" guaranteed to last from 3 to 6 months and delight you completely or your money will be cheerfully refunded.

GUM GRIPPER, INC.
 127 N. Dearborn St., Dept. 50, Chicago 12, Ill.

No tears for the Sarge and his stooges, eh?

ON A SOUR NOTE

by Jack Clements

Dear Editor: Pep it up gents. I'm referring to the Reader Speaks. Wasn't so hot this time. It seems that there were too many ratings of the first place to sonso type. What with no Oliver around to keep things jumping, it got kinda dull. Rick Sneyary was of course good, as he could give an essay on "How to dry dodo-plumes without damaging them" and be interesting. Freddie Burgess had a swell letter, I personally think that Good's reasoning, though it can be worked out logically, is wacky. Simply the idea that space is curved gives no reason why it should be definitely finite. But so much of that gets rather dull.

Marvin Maxwell's suggestion to put a "synposus" (thanks Marv) at the beginning of the reader's page is silly. In the first place it would be a waste of valuable space, (Try to sum up one of Leinster's plots in one paragraph) and besides Marvin, don't you know that if a story is REALLY good, you certainly won't forget it in a period of time as short as that of a few months.

Which brings us to the main reason for writing this thing. Why must we have two-issue-old letter comments? When somebody starts that routine about "Look at that funny looking guy in the lower left hand corner of page 61" It is a necessity to get out the mag and look at it or be bounded by curiosity. If this letter business is beyond your control, forget the above gripe. But if it isn't, please do something.

In case you haven't discovered it yet, these comments are about the June ish of T.W.S. I see that I forgot to mention it.

Art this time is above average, with the amount of Marchioni drawings cut down. Hooooooray for Stevens. Oh yes, who is newcomer on pages 55 and 61. (See what I mean) He looks a little like Matin. Also on page 82.

Cover is not quite as good as in the last few issues. Get Bergey off of your other mags and keep him on T.W.S. and S.S. and we'll see really some good stuff.

THE BOOMERANG CIRCUIT was very good. I'm glad to see that Leinster is appearing so often.

Almost all the rest of the stories are very good. It seems that Murray was in a hurry when he wrote FROM BEYOND THE STARS (It must have taken a brilliant mind to think up a title like that. Almost identical with an old Cummings story. The title, I mean).

But the story was plenty okay. Just one more question. Why do we have to say "In a certain other magazine I read such and such" when everybody knows the name of the other mag anyway from the comments, so why can't we say it. But if it's policy restrictions, I'll do it too. To wit: In a certain other mag the title cut has been changed to play up the word science-fiction instead of the title of the mag. Why don't you at least try to get rid of most of the lettering across the drawing. It's astounding what a difference that can make in the appearance.

Don't wear out your blue pencil, Ed., I'll sign off now.—6310 Madison Road, Cincinnati 27, Ohio.

P.S. In case I forgot to mention it, your mag is sfwell. Contest idea is terrific.

So Oliver hasn't been writing as regularly as of yore. Well, we miss him too, but have no control of his epistolatory activities, so we have to get on as best we can. As for the two-issue-old letters, we cannot control it, our deadline being what it is. If we turn in the column too soon a lot of our better contributors are left out in the cold.

The newcomer you inquire about is Napoli. The other Astarita. As for this "certain-other-magazine" business, we don't care whether you know who it is or not. The local brass is logically ungiven to handing out

plugs to rivals without charge. We're taking a lot of the lettering off the covers in forthcoming issues.

A PLEA FOR PIC-HACKS

by Frances Laubs

Dear Editor: I just recently picked up the latest issue of TWS, and the first thing I looked for was "The Reader Speaks". I was at once both pleased and surprised to see that the venerable 'Sarge' had finally been overthrown. In a way I hated to see him go, for in the beginning the terms and language were quite fascinating, but as the years wore on so did 'Sarge' and his Xeno juice, BEM's and what not. On the whole I'd say your switch was for the better.

On the other hand I have a little matter which I would like to place before you and the readers. It is mainly; why don't you give us amateur artists a break for a change? You sponsor one contest after another for the amateur writers, but do you ever have a contest for artists? No you don't. I'm sure that if you were ever to try an art contest it would go over big. But I don't suppose that that will ever come to pass in my time.—251 South Carlisle Street, Greencastle, Pennsylvania.

All right, Mrs. Laubs, we'll put it up to the fans here and now. Do you want an amateur art contest or not? We shall do our best to abide by the result.

WHAT! !!!

by Lynn Stanley Cheney

Dear Editor: I would like to say a few words in praise of Edmond Hamilton's masterpiece, "Come Home From Earth". I can't remember reading a better short story in recent issues. It was very thought provoking. Let's have more like it.

Now let's say a few words of the works of Henry Kuttner. In the novel "Way of the Gods", he came forth in his usual style, which is excellent to say the least. But "Trouble on Titan"—oh no! This can't be Kuttner! Of least it isn't the usual Kuttner. Hank must have been sick when he wrote that one.

In the June issue "You Are Forbidden" by Jerry Shelton was interesting, very much so. But that's enough for the stories. Let's change to other and less pleasant subjects.

As for the illustrations in the June issue, the ones for "The Boomerang Circuit" and "You Are Forbidden" were good. The rest not so good. As for the cover, the girl was okay but I think she belonged on a love magazine rather than on TWS.

Now for The Reader Speaks. Paul Bergen comes right out and states what he wants and turns around and says in one sentence that readers don't know what they want. Funny isn't it?

Say, I want to bring up something different now. Why don't you print some poetry? This might bring some opposition but that's okay. Two or three poems an issue wouldn't hurt at all and I think that it would help the magazine a lot. Think it over.—743 Orange Ave., Yuma, Arizona.

Come to think of it, you fans threw little doggerel at your Ed. this time out. So, to make frere Cheney content, make up for it in the next issue, will you?

GREAT OAKLANDS FROM LITTLE A-CORNS. . .

by George Ebey

Dear Sir: This story by Jerry Shelton in the June issue of TWS was rather neat: neat, suspenseful, ironic and original. "You Are Forbidden"—that's the one; one doesn't see many like this in the usual mag

[Turn page]



AUTO BOOKS ON APPROVAL



SEND NO MONEY. Just mail the coupon for a complete set of 4 Big, Thick Auto Books. 20th Edition. 2800 Pages! Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, take immediate advantage of this **FREE EXAMINATION OFFER.**

MAKE GOOD MONEY NOW HOLD A PERMANENT JOB

America wants its automobiles kept in good repair. Men with "know how" are in demand, at big pay. These books will help you get and hold an important job, or give you a chance to go into business for yourself now or later. Any man who half tries to improve himself can learn auto servicing and repairing by this quick reference method. Use the **JIFFY INDEX** to find easily understood answer to any auto problem. These wonder books prepared by eleven of America's great automobile engineers. Many hundreds of valuable illustrations. Send the coupon TODAY.

A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge.

Vocational Publishers Since 1898

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. A749
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.
I would like to examine your 4-Volume Set of Auto Books. I will pay the delivery charges only, but if I choose I may return them express collect. If after 10 days' use I prefer to keep them, I will send you \$2 and pay the balance at the rate of only \$3 a month until \$24.80 has been paid. Include consulting service as offered above.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Please attach letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address, and name and address of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.

STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering. Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogue Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering—successful for 45 years. Free—no obligation.

Benjamin N. Bogue, Dept. 4283, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.

Learn BAKING At Home

Baking is one of America's high industries in wages. Nearly depression-proof. Thorough basic home course lays sound foundation. If you have aptitude, write for **FREE BOOKLET**, "Opportunities in Commercial Baking."

National Baking School, 1315 Mich. Ave., Dept. 1807, Chicago 5



THOUGHTS HAVE WINGS

YOU CAN influence others with your thinking! Learn to impress others favorably—get across your ideas. Let the Rosicrucians show you how to use the power of mind. For free book write Scribe F.X.Z.

THE ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC)
San Jose, California



BE A Nurse

MAKE \$30-\$40 A WEEK

Practical nurses are needed in every community... doctors rely on them... patients appreciate their cheerful, expert care. You can learn practical nursing at home in spare time. Course endorsed by physicians, 48th yr. Earn while learning. High School not required. Men, women, 18 to 60. Trial plan. Write now!

CHICAGO SCHOOL OF NURSING
Dept. 429, 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11, Ill.

Please send free booklet and 18 sample lesson pages.

Name.....

City..... State..... Age.....

NEW MIDGET ELECTRIC
ARC WELDER
FULLY GUARANTEED
RETAILS ONLY \$3.95



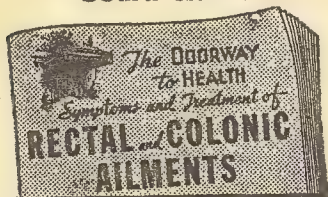
Plugs into Light Socket—AC or DC

It's new! It's handy! It's efficient! Use the Midget Electric Arc Welder for hundreds of light-metal jobs. Does comparable welding work with a 1/16 inch welding rod on thin metal as that of larger and higher priced welders. Operates on 15 ampere fuse, 110 volt 60 cycle A.C. or D.C. current, by use of our special standard-coated 1/16 inch welding rods. Generous supply of rods supplied with machine. Recommended for all light welding like automobile fenders, etc. Take the Midget Arc anywhere to the job. Sturdily built and fully guaranteed. Comes complete—ready to use. Nothing else to buy. No previous welding experience needed to strike an arc. In a short time, anyone mechanically inclined can learn to weld with this machine. You'll find hundreds of money-saving, time-saving uses for the Midget Arc around your home, garage, or workshop. Also in garages, factories, repair shops, tin shops, mechanics, farmers, inventors, etc. Order a Midget Electric Arc Welder now! **SEND NO MONEY.** We'll rush one to you, complete with rods and helmet (equipped with APPROVED welding glasses). Pay postman only \$3.95 plus postage charges. If not satisfied, return Midget Arc in 5 days from receipt and we'll refund your money immediately. **RUSH YOUR ORDER NOW.**

MIDGET ARC WELDER CO., Strader Ave., Dept. C-233, Cincinnati 26, Ohio

Dangers Of Delay On Chronic Ailments

**FREE BOOK—Tells How To Help
Guard Health**



Many facts about colon disorders, headaches, constipation, nervousness or stomach, liver and bladder conditions are explained in a new 40-page **FREE BOOK**. Write today. Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite 1056, 926 McGee Street, Kansas City, Mo.

Made to U.S. Army Specifications!

15-JEWEL

ELGIN
\$18.95



Sturdy 15-Jewel ELGIN men's wrist watches. Waterproof. Sweep second hand. Stainless Steel back. Unbreakable crystal. **QUALITY!** American made. Fully reconditioned with **ONE YEAR GUARANTEE!** Made for the U. S. Army Air Corps. They **HAD** to be good. **SEND NO MONEY.** Simply pay postman \$18.95 plus 10% tax and postage on delivery. Cash orders sent postpaid. Limited supply. **UNITED PRODUCTS CO., 7941 S. Halsted St., Dept. WES-132, Chicago 20, Ill.**

but maybe TWS is improving its standards. I also liked "A Hitch in Time" and "The Big Night" by James MacCreigh and Hudson Hastings respectively. Leinster appears to be grinding out his stuff with both eyes closed but if the rest of the readers can stand it so can I. Sturgeon is oke with me but this fellow William Fitzgerald who writes the *Bud Gregory* series should be ashamed of himself.

I also liked the illustrations for "The Boomerang Circuit" but not very much—as the little girl said. And your hired man Marchioni is at least as good as he was ten years ago.

And so on and so on. . . I don't know why I bothered with the foregoing when what I really wanted to say was something about your fan mag contest being worthwhile and heartening and to express my hope that you get lots of cooperation from the fan publishers.—4766 Reinhardt Drive, Oakland, California.

Thanks, George, despite the somewhat dim view of most of our recent stories. As we have repeatedly said, we thought the contest a fine idea . . . but the submissions have so far been of unexpectedly low standard. Let's hope they come uphill and fast.

Well, that does it for this time. Thanks for the missives and let's hear more from all of you. We'll be back at the same stand in another couple of months and in the meantime write to The Editor, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, New York.

—THE EDITOR

PROBATE

(Concluded from page 82)

even remember your letting Gervis in." After she and her son had gone, Donaldson felt an enormous bitterness. He hadn't, in the last analysis, been able to do it. The years of easy living, the kindnesses, the solicitude, had undone him. Something—the fighting heart, the ruthlessness—had gone out of him.

He sat for a long time looking blankly at the blotting paper on his desk. Today had been the last time Homo sapiens had dreamed of regaining his leadership. Today had seen the last flicker of revolt. No man would revolt again.

Equanimity began to invade him at last. What had that poem said? That there was nothing stranger than man. And Aucassir had spoken of gratitude, had said they built on what Old Man had builded first.

Donaldson drew a deep sigh. It was all right. Man had lived that New Man, his inheritor, his successor, might be born. Homo sapiens had, however unwillingly, handed on the torch. It was all right.

After a while Jim Donaldson picked out an assortment of screwdrivers and wrenches from the tools on his work bench and began dismantling his machine.

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW

THIS month's science fiction volume for review is **THE LEGION OF SPACE**, by Jack Williamson, published by Fantasy Press of Reading, Pennsylvania at a price of \$3.00.

This is space opera with a vengeance—with passably good characterization and dialogue imbedded in an interplanetary chamber of horrors that, after the first hundred pages, seems to go on forever and actually does. Told through the diary of an ex-Spanish Civil War veteran who, while dying,



has discovered ability to remember the far-distant future as well as the past, its opening pages are probably the best in the opus.

Thereafter it settles down to the old or rather future world struggle against dictatorship—in this case an Emperor of the Sun and its commuting-distance planets who seeks to overthrow the liberal government, called Green Hall, by corruption of the Legion of Space.

One family, the Ulnars, descendants of the deposed emperors, are behind all the devilry. They have made contact with some octopus-like super beings on a singularly hideous planet of a distant dwarf star and, with their aid, plan to snatch from her hidden refuge on Mars the lone girl in whom the secret of AKKA, the simple but terrible instrument which alone can defeat space invasion resides.

John Ulnar, a distant relative of the family (descended from a more liberal branch), is one of those given the job of guarding the girl and, after being betrayed by his cousin, steals a space ship and, with a few loyal and true friends and the chief traitor as companions, sets out for the distant planet of horrors and saves her and the System from final sabotage.

So far the story follows the rhythm of the

[Turn page]



OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

For Men Who are Trained in AUTO BODY & FENDER WORK

Men 18 to 60. Want a future with good pay, perhaps a business of your own later? If you are mechanically inclined, start now to learn to become an auto body mechanic and fender repair man. This fast growing field has great possibilities for trained men with experience. U. E. I. spare time, home-study training combined with actual shop practice gives you sound, basic knowledge of latest, best methods so you may get the experience which may bring you big pay. Capable instructors supervise your studies and actual practice. Course includes acetylene welding, spray painting, use of hand and power tools, etc.

THOROUGH, RELIABLE TRAINING

U. E. I. has trained men for new opportunity fields since 1927 and many students are now making good. Auto body and fender repairing is one of the best profit-makers in any garage or service station. Little capital required. . . . placement service, or we will show you how to start your own shop. Get the facts FREE, without obligation. Write today.

Training approved under G. I. Bill

UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE

AUTO-CRAFTS DIVISION

2523 Sheffield Ave., Dept. X-748, Chicago 14, Ill.

Gentlemen: — YES! I want to get into profitable Auto Body and Fender Repair Work. Please send me FREE FACTS at once.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone or _____ State _____
County _____

If veteran of World War II check here ☐
☐ Check here for Special Information if under 17.



PHOTO-RING

ANY PHOTO OR PICTURE

Of Sweetheart, Relative or Friend, reproduced permanently in this beautiful onyx like ring featuring the New Magnified Setting! Will last a lifetime! Indestructible!

\$1.00

Waterproof! Enclose strip of paper for ring size. Pay postman plus a few cents postage. If you send cash we pay postage. (Photos Returned.) (Expertly painted 25c extra.)

PHOTO MOVETTE RING CO., Dept. T-1, CINCINNATI, OHIO

If Ruptured Try This Out

Modern Protection Provides Great Comfort and Holding Security

Without Torturous Truss Wearing

An "eye-opening" revelation in sensible and comfortable reducible rupture protection may be yours for the asking, without cost or obligation. Simply send name and address to William S. Rice, Inc., Dept. 1-L, Adams, N. Y., and full details of the new and different Rice Method will be sent you Free. Without hard flesh-gouging pads or tormenting pressure, here's a Support that has brought joy and comfort to thousands—by releasing them from Trusses with springs and straps, that bind and cut. Designed to securely hold a rupture up and in where it belongs and yet give freedom of body and genuine comfort. For full information—write today!



MAKE THIS EASY 7-DAY TEST! DO YOU WANT LONGER HAIR?

Just try this **SYSTEM** on your hair 7 days and see if you are really enjoying the pleasure of **ATTRACTIVE HAIR** that can so very often capture Love and Romance for you.

MARVELOUS HELP for DRY, BRITTLE, Breaking-Off Hair
WHEN SCALP and HAIR CONDITIONS are normal and dry, brittle, breaking-off hair can be retarded, it has a chance to get longer... and much more beautiful.

SEND NO MONEY—Fully Guaranteed

Just try the **JUELENE SYSTEM** for 7 days. Then let your mirror PROVE the thrilling results. **JUELENE** comes in 2 Forms ☐ Pomade ☐ Liquid. **SEND FOR IT TODAY!** C. O. D. \$1.00 plus Government charges. It is fully guaranteed. Money back if you are not delighted. Write Now! **JUEL CO., 4727 N. Damen, Dept. B-635, Chicago 25, Ill.**

What Every Mason Wants



We have important Masonic books for Blue Lodge, Chapter, Commandery, Scottish Rite, and Shrine.

OUR RITUALS ARE USED THE WORLD OVER

Send for free catalog of books and rituals for Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Columbus, etc.

EZRA A. COOK, Publisher, P. O. 796, GO, Chicago 90, Ill.



GOOD FOR YOUR SPARE TIME.

Be our Dealer in your locality for **STRONG UNION MADE WORK SPORT GARMENTS**. No experience necessary. Easy work. Millions of workers buy work uniforms. We supply everything needed. Write immediately for **FREE CATALOG**.

ROBT. STRONG GARMENT CO., 319-327 W. Van Buren St., Dept. K-9, Chicago, Ill.



DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have with Tobacco Redeemer. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men. Caution: Use only as directed.

30 Years in Business
THE NEWELL COMPANY
153 Clayton, Sta., St. Louis 5, Mo.

FREE BOOK

Free for Asthma

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma and choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is difficult because of the struggle to breathe, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Company for a **FREE** trial of the **FRONTIER ASTHMA MEDICINE**, a preparation for temporary symptomatic relief of paroxysms of Bronchial Asthma. No matter where you live or whether you have faith in any medicine under the sun, send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing. Caution! Use only as directed. Address

FRONTIER ASTHMA CO.

439-A FRONTIER BLDG.

462 NIAGARA STREET

BUFFALO 1, N. Y.

cliches rather than the spheres as any veteran stf reader will plainly recognize. And it never once deviates from the tried-and-true stencil pattern all the way through its breath-taking finale, with the girl-friend finally setting up her AKKA in time to save good old Terra from ultimate annihilation.

However, Mr. Williamson has created such a series of horrors, one crowded on the heels of another, that his work merits the credit of ingenuity if nothing else. The Grand Guignol of Paris has nothing on the dreadful fates which continually loom in front of his trusty argonauts and which they as continually evade or conquer.

Those who go for this sort of thing will find it much to their liking. We found it a little tiresome after our satiation point was reached. However, the book is well written and authors and publishers deserve equal credit for bringing out another in the growing series of stf books.

Jacket, binding, printing and illustrations are all of the highest quality. A little mournfully we wish we could say the same for the text.

—THE EDITOR.

EXIT THE PROFESSOR

(Continued from page 89)

perfesser staggering after him. Galbraith was a mess. He sank down and wheezed, looking back at the door in a worried way.

"Funny thing happened," Uncle Les said. "I was flying along outside town and there was the perfesser running away from a big crowd of people with sheets wrapped around 'em—some of 'em. So I picked him up. I brung him here, like he wanted." Uncle Les winked at me.

"Ooooh!" Galbraith said. "Aaaah! Are they coming?"

Maw went to the door.

"They's a lot of torches moving up the mountain," she said. "It looks right bad."

The perfesser glared at me.

"You said you could hide me! Well, you'd better! This is your fault!"

"Shucks," I said.

"You'll hide me or else!" Galbraith

America's Most Popular Picture Magazine

SEE

Now on Sale—15c at all Stands!

squaled. "I—I'll bring that commission down."

"Look," I said, "if we hide you safe, will you promise to forget all about that commission and leave us alone?"

The perfesser promised. "Hold on a minute," I said and went up to the attic to see Grandpaw.

He was awake.

"How about it, Grandpaw?" I asked.

He listened to Little Sam for a second.

"The knave is lying," he told me pretty soon. "He means to bring his commission of stinkards here anyway, recking naught of his promise."

"Should we hide him, then?"

"Aye," Grandpaw said. "The Hogbens have given their word—there must be no more killing. And to hide a fugitive from his pursuers would not be an ill deed, surely."

Maybe he winked. It's hard to tell with Grandpaw. So I went down the ladder. Galbraith was at the door, watching the torches come up the mountain.

He grabbed me.

"Saunk! If you don't hide me—"

"We'll hide you," I said. "C'mon."

So we took him down to the cellar. . . .

When the mob got here, with Sheriff Abernathy in the lead, we played dumb. We let 'em search the house. Little Sam and Grandpaw turned invisible for a bit, so nobody noticed them. And naturally the crowd couldn't find hide nor hair of Galbraith. We'd hid him good, like we promised.

That was a few years ago. The perfesser's thriving. He ain't studying us, though. Sometimes we take out the bottle we keep him in and study him.

Dang small bottle, too!

**True Picture-Stories of Great Heroes in
REAL LIFE COMICS—10c at all Stands!**

Watch the Smoke Curl

**Kentucky Tavern
BARBECUE ASH TRAY**

ALSO AN INCENSE BURNER!
It's different! It's beautiful! It's useful... attractive for home and office. Handcolored to look like the real firestones. Smoke curls out the chimney. Holds generous supply of cigarettes and matches. Has metal fireplace grill cover which lifts out to remove ashes. Ideal gift. \$1.98—includes a package of incense.

Rush this COUPON

SEND NO MONEY! ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MART
Dept. 1475, 1227 LOYOLA AVENUE, CHICAGO 26, ILLINOIS
(1) Rush Barbecue Ash Tray C.O.D. for \$1.98 on money back guarantee.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

ATHLETE'S FOOT & RINGWORM SUFFERERS



Get KERODIN for Positive RELIEF... or MONEY BACK!

STOPS ITCHING MISERY FAST!

You may marvel at the speed with which KERODIN brings relief. By causing a gentle peeling of the treated cuticle, KERODIN is able to destroy parasites buried under outer skin.

EASY TO USE

Just paint affected parts with KERODIN LIQUID every night until relieved (from 3 to 10 days). Use KERODIN POWDER in the morning for all-day benefit, and to kill germs in shoes that re-infect.

**POSITIVE RESULTS
OR YOUR
MONEY BACK**



Send only \$1 for this \$1.50 value

KERODIN PRODUCTS CO.

11101 S. Western Ave., Chicago 43, Ill.

I enclose \$1.00 in ☐ CASH ☐ CASHIER'S CHECK
☐ MONEY ORDER for Special KERODIN COMBINATION. If I am not entirely satisfied, I will return empty bottle for full refund.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

LAW...

STUDY AT HOME Legally trained men win higher positions and bigger success in business and public life. Greater opportunities now than ever before. **More Ability: More Prestige: More Money** We guide you can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL.B. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 48-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send NOW, G. I. APPROVED. LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, 417 South Dearborn Street 'A' Correspondence Institution Dept. 10329-1 Chicago 5, Ill.



Relieve Misery of ITCH

Relieve itching caused by eczema, athlete's foot, pimples—other itching troubles. Use cooling, medicated D.D.D. Prescription. Greaseless, stainless. Quiets itching fast. 35c trial bottle proves it—or money back. Ask your druggist for D.D.D. Prescription.

Learn PHOTOGRAPHY at Home

Splendid opportunities. Prepare in spare time. Practical basic training. Long-established school. Send for free book, "Opportunities in Photography." No obligation. American School of Photography, 1315 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 1807, Chicago 5, Ill.

"YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!" Help Bring Crooks to Justice Through Scientific CRIME DETECTION!



We have taught thousands this exciting, profitable, pleasant profession. Let us teach you in your own home. Learn Fingerprinting, Firearms Identification, Police Photography, Secret Service Methods thoroughly, quickly, at small cost. Over 800 of all American Bureaus of Identification employ I. A. S. students or graduates. We can prepare you for this fascinating work, during spare time. Write today, stating age, for "Blue Book of Crime."

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, 1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7967, Chicago 40, Ill.

WHICH OF THESE *EXCITING* BOOKS DO YOU WANT?

Now you can enjoy many hours of exciting reading pleasure at a small fraction of the original cost. The Popular Library reprints bring you word-for-word, page-for-page books of proved popularity in durable reprints. Take your choice of the titles listed below.

- EVERY ONE A FULL-SIZED VOLUME!
- EVERY ONE A FAMOUS BEST SELLER!
- EVERY ONE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AT \$2 OR MORE PER COPY!

ONLY
25¢
EACH



POPULAR LIBRARY *Mysteries*

- 113 CRUCIBLE by Ben Ames Williams
- 111 BEDELIA by Vera Caspary
- 87 FATAL DESCENT by John Rhode & Carter Dickson
- 109 I'LL SING AT YOUR FUNERAL by Hugh Pentecost
- 108 THE YELLOW VIOLET by Frances Crane
- 98 DIVIDEND ON DEATH by Brett Halliday
- 97 A VARIETY OF WEAPONS by Rufus King

POPULAR LIBRARY *Westerns*

- 85 TROUBLE SHOOTER by Ernest Haycox
- 103 THE PHANTOM CANOE by William Byron Mowery
- 114 RAMROD by Luke Short
- 86 BUCKY FOLLOWS A COLD TRAIL
by William MacLeod Raine
- 104 MESQUITE JENKINS, TUMBLEWEED
by Clarence E. Mulford
- 96 SINGING RIVER by W. C. Tuttle
- 95 THE RED LAW by Jackson Gregory



POPULAR LIBRARY *Specials*

- 102 DUEL IN THE SUN by Niven Busch
- 110 CONGO SONG by Stuart Cloete
- 94 THE MORTAL STORM by Phyllis Bottome
- 115 POPULAR BOOK OF CARTOONS
- 107 CROSSWORD PUZZLES
- 91 THE SEA-HAWK by Rafael Sabatini
- 101 LUMMOX by Fannie Hurst

POPULAR LIBRARY, INC., Dept. TFG-10
10 East 40th St., New York 16, N. Y.

Send me postpaid the Popular Library books I have circled. I enclose 25c (in coin or in U. S. stamps of small denominations) per copy (NOTE: We pay postage on orders for 4 books or more. If ordering less than 4 books, please enclose 5c per book extra for postage.)

85	91	96	101	104	109	113
86	94	97	102	107	110	114
87	95	98	103	108	111	115

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY & ZONE.....STATE.....

ORDER BY NUMBER
MAIL COUPON TODAY!

Read the Best Comics in America



GERONIMO!

HERE THEY COME
... THE GREATEST
MAGAZINES YOU'VE
EVER READ! FOR
ADVENTURE, LAUGHS,
EXCITEMENT, THRILLS...

Read 'Em All!

**10¢ AT
ALL
STANDS**

NEW **EVEREADY**

TRADE-MARK

FLASHLIGHT BATTERIES

*Now last 93% longer!**

Enough Energy to Hurl This Daring Miss Over 100 FEET!

Imagine!—the girl weighs 110 pounds! Yet the total energy in one tiny "Eveready" flashlight cell—properly expended—is equal to the charge that sends her flying up—up—over the gasping audience, to land over 100 feet away.

PACKED with new dynamic power... dazzling in performance... durable beyond any flashlight cells you've ever known, "Eveready" flashlight batteries give you the year's greatest energy value. That's a 93% increase over the great record made by pre-war "Eveready" cells... nearly double the life of light. Yet you pay no more.

The registered trade-mark "Eveready" distinguishes products of

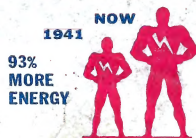
NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC.

80 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Unit of Union Carbide **UCC** and Carbon Corporation



High Energy
**MEANS BRIGHTER LIGHT,
LONGER LIFE**



* To you, this means nearly twice the energy... almost two times longer life of bright white light. And it's yours for the pre-war price... still only 10¢!